

The two remaining BOE budget presentations are scheduled for:

- April 7 Franklin School Library, 7 p.m.
- April 8 Kennedy School Library, 7 p.m.

APR 04 2008
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Observer

VOL. 11, NO. 31

MEMBER NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

50 CENTS

APRIL 4, 2008



Rick McCriskin and Jim Gustafson of McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals enlist the help of Mayor Butrico, Council President Rob Bengivenga, Drew Stettner of Holly Hill Tree Moving and Councilmen Tim McConville and Matt Anesh in preparation for the relocation of a 100+ year old Japanese maple from the proposed library site to the funeral home. See next week's issue for story.

BOE Budget Reflects Reduced Tax Rate

If voters approve the 2008-2009 Board of Education budget, they will see a lower rate in the school board portion of their local taxes. The BOE approved the 2008-2009 budget at a special meeting held on March 26. The amount to be raised by taxes is \$39,108,513 of the total budget amount of \$54,336,869.

Although the overall budget this year has increased from \$51,438,932 to \$54,336,869, the 2008-2009 tax levy is down \$942,805 from last year's \$40,050,318, and the tax rate is down four points from last year's 2.863 to 2.823 per \$100 of assessed valuation. A homeowner whose property is assessed at \$121,118 will pay \$3,419.16 for the 2008-2009 fiscal year or \$36.48 less than last year's assessment of \$3,455, according to figures provided by Interim Business Administrator George Sarnoff.

The reduction is attributed to an increase of 20% in state aid, more realistic estimates for health costs and surpluses from previous budgets accumulated under budgeted fund balance amounting to \$2,721,324.

A capital reserve fund of \$1,847,264 was established for projects to maintain the district's physical plant needs.

The proposed budget will add new

teachers and programs, including a special education class at the high school, with teachers and aides, and a guidance counselor for an elementary school. A new sport—swimming—will be added to the athletic program at the high school. The swim team began swimming competitively for SPHS this past year financed through private fundraising. They had a successful season, winning eight meets.

According to board member Debbie Boyle, "There are 125 South Plainfield youngsters who compete in the PAL Community Pool Tiger Sharks team. When moving on from middle school, some youngsters have gone to other schools to continue their competitive swimming activity. Now they don't need to go to Bishop Ahr to swim."

SPHS students are participating in the O Ambassadors program, a joint project of Oprah's Angel Network and Free the Children. The students are working towards the UN Millennium Development Goals, learning about global issues and making a tangible difference in the lives of their peers in the developing world.

The group is part of a network of O Ambassadors clubs across North America that are working to find solutions to global challenges through active learning, idea-sharing and taking action. Through the program, youth in North America have the unique opportunity to develop leadership skills and become active and compassionate global citizens.

"This new group is an addition to our Student Leadership organization which, throughout the years, has been extremely active with assisting those in need at both the local and national level. It's exciting to now have this opportunity to help people in other countries," said Marla Vandermark, student leadership advisor.

During the year, the O Ambassadors Club will raise awareness about the importance of a holistic approach to development by focusing on the Mil-

UNICO National Honors Louis DeFillipo and Dr. John Farinella

On March 18 UNICO National District X honored South Plainfield residents Louis A. DeFillipo and Dr. John Farinella and presented each of them with the Americanism Award.

Unfortunately, DeFillipo suffered a heart attack earlier that day and died the following day. Both men were WWII war heroes and longtime members of UNICO.

DeFillipo had a distinguished life of volunteerism and was recognized with many awards over the years, including a citation from Governor Kean in 1986 for being named Volunteer Fireman of the United States of America. He was chosen as honorary grand marshal of the South Plainfield Labor Day Parade in 1977. He had been a member of Plainfield's Chapter of UNICO National since 1975 and was an enthusiastic and vis-



Louis DeFillipo



Mayor Charles Butrico (left) joins Council President Rob Bengivenga (right) in presenting UNICO National District X's Americanism award honoring Dr. John Farinella (center) and Louis A. DeFillipo (inset).

ible supporter of the ideals of UNICO National, serving as sergeant-at-arms for 80 years, district sergeant-at-arms for 10 years, vice president and president for two years.

He served five years in the U.S. Infantry during World War II. He was awarded the British Military Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star with one cluster and Combat Infantry Badge. He was past commander and honorary life member of American Legion Post 243; first vice commander and membership chairman of American Legion Post 243; charter member and life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6763 and life member in Disabled American

Veterans Association.

He was a South Plainfield Volunteer fireman since 1938, serving nine years as president, five years as lieutenant and two years as captain. He also served as president of South Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association for the past 24 years and was president of the Association of Exempt Firemen of South Plainfield for the past 15 years.

He was also past exalted ruler, charter member and honorary life member of South Plainfield Elks Lodge 2298; a member of Holy Name Society; leader of the ushers for past 21 years; past grand knight and fourth degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

Dr. John Farinella has been an active member of UNICO for many years, serving as president, secretary, Columbus Day chairman, Gifts to Troops chairman, a delegate to district, regional meeting and national conventions, alternate and deputy of district governor and district governor.

He served in the U.S. Air Force for five years. After his training he sailed on the Queen Elizabeth and landed Scotland. He was assigned to the 10th Air Disarmament Group in 1944. As U.S. forces moved deeper into Germany, a group operations base was established at an airplane engine factory in Eisenach, Germany. His unit gathered information about enemy forces and operated in teams of four men and a jeep. The missions were in enemy territory and included locating poison gas canisters at a concentration camp and warheads hidden in a mine several thousand feet below ground.

He was actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America from 1962 to 1965 and the Lions Clubs International, where he served as president of the Westbrook Club, the New Jersey Lions Charitable Foundation, the New Jersey Lions State Committee for Sight Conservation and a member of the board of directors and held many other positions in the Lions organization.

He was named Clark Citizen of the Year in 1985 from B'nai B'rith in Clark.

Borough Clerk's Office Open Wednesday Evenings

The Borough Clerk's Office will be open Wednesday evenings until 8 p.m. so that residents may pick up compactor coupons.

FYI

Students Join Oprah in Aiding Communities

By Jane Dornick



Students participating in the O Ambassadors program. Pictured left to right: bottom row—Kelvin Randolph, Jenae Keith, Erik White; middle row—Hamiko Reid, Katie Egan, Stephanie Lanza, Kim Percavio, Juliana Agrillo, Donta Rice and top row—Alyssa McCreesh, Michael Boyle, Ashleigh Gray and Nicole Slatky.

lennium Development Goals. Every two months the club will choose a different theme; poverty, education, health or sustainable development, in Latin America and organize fundraising and awareness-raising events for the school with the help of posters, how-to-guides, regional guides and an Educator binder (with curricula). The funds raised will go to holistic development projects

in Latin America. Clubs have the opportunity to choose the world regions they would like to research and support. These projects provide local children and their families with the tools they need to break the cycle of poverty. All projects will be carried out in partnership with the local community.

For more information, visit www.oambassadors.org.

SPHS Players Drama Club presents



Thursday April 10 - 7 PM
Friday April 11 - 7 PM
Saturday April 12 - 7 PM
Sunday April 13 - 2 PM

Tickets: Adults \$10, Students & Seniors \$8

COUNCIL MEETINGS air on Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

AGENDA and/or Other SPECIAL Meetings air every Saturday at 8 p.m.

(Check community bulletin board for last minute time changes.)



The March 19 BOE Public Meeting will air on Comcast Channel 74 Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. until the next public meeting on Wednesday, April 9. Comcast will air two hours of a meeting. To purchase a copy of a complete Borough Council or BOE meeting, contact the *Observer*.

Superintendents BOE Budget Presentation will air Saturday, April 5 and 12 at 8 p.m., followed by the Meet the Candidates Night.

councilmeetings

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

Monday, April 7 (7 p.m.)

Monday, April 14

Monday, May 12 (7 p.m.)

Public Meeting

Monday, April 7 (8 p.m.)

Monday, April 21

Monday, May 12 (8 p.m.)

All meetings of the Governing Body are held in accordance with New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (NJS 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

April 8, April 22, May 13, June 10, June 24, July 8, July 22,

Aug. 26, Sept. 9, Sept 23, Oct. 7, Oct. 21, Nov 18*, Dec. 9*.

zoning

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

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

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.

Regular Meeting Wednesdays 8 p.m. 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.

siteplanreviewcommittee

Meets once a month on the third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m.

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

April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8 November 12, December 10 and January 14.

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.

IN MY OPINION

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

To the Editor:

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus Council #6203 recently completed the Sacred Heart Church Lenten fish dinners. This is the third year the Knights of Columbus ran the dinners. Over 1700 dinners were sold with an average of 290 people ordering dinners every week.

The Knights of Columbus would like to thank McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals and the South Plainfield Funeral Home for their very generous donations. The Knights would also like to thank Sherban's Diner for donating desserts every week. Our local businesses are always very generous in their support of charitable organizations in town.

The Knights would also like to thank all of the men and women who volunteered their time in helping set up, prepare, serve and clean up. Without their dedication, the dinners would not be possible.

In addition, a big thank you goes out to all the teens that came out to help with the dinners. They did a great job greeting the people who attended, serving the dinners and clearing the tables.

A special thank you, as well, to all of the Knights of Columbus members and their families that came out to support our council in this endeavor. They truly pulled together to make each week a great success.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of the residents who came over the six weeks to these dinners. This was a great community event that we would like to see continue for many years to come.

**SINCERELY,
BILL BUTRICO, GRAND KNIGHT**

To the Editor:

Wonderful things are happening at the South Plainfield Library! Books, magazines and audio-visual materials are delivered to us here at Arista-Care at Cedar Oaks every week, rain or shine! All the more reason why we need a new library!

**PHYLLIS HAASE, (RESIDENT)
ARISTA-CARE AT CEDAR OAKS
CARE CENTER**

To the Editor:

The South Plainfield Education Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make our first wine tasting event a success.

We would like to thank Presto Printing for printing our tickets for us. Also a huge thank you to Flanagan's and Hometown Heros for providing our

food and Witty's for the wine. Our thanks to Bob Boyle, Debbie Boyle and Rob Richkus for organizing the event and our members for helping during the evening.

We hope that all who attended were pleased and had an enjoyable time with friends.

We will be planning another wine tasting event in the future and we hope that it will exceed this year's event. The South Plainfield Education Foundation and the South Plainfield Business Association will be having our golf outing on May 6. Anyone interested please contact Carolyn Allen at (908) 561-3275 or Marge Reedy (908) 561-5800, ext. 302.

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

To the Editor:

Regarding John Dean's letter in last week's *Observer*:

Many people quietly donate their money and time to various charities and needy people without making a public announcement or contacting the *Observer* for a photo op. These are the unsung heroes that do not need their egos stroked.

MAUREEN TERHUNE

Dear Members and Friends of the Historical Society,

Larry Randolph, former president of the Historical Society, will be honored in the council chambers at Borough Hall on Monday, April 7 at 7 p.m. Please join us as Mayor Charles Butrico and the councilmen recognize one of South Plainfield's finest citizens for his work as historian, archaeologist and environmentalist.

Among Larry's many achievements are archaeological discoveries of Native American Indian occupation in South Plainfield; the excavation of the New Brooklyn Grist Mill; the establishment of a Civil War Memorial in Monument Park; and the preservation of Highland Avenue Woods Nature Reserve. His

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: spobsobserver@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.

newspaper articles, published between 1986-1990 and based on his own extensive research, were the first to explore South Plainfield's history. Larry resigned as chairman of the South Plainfield Environmental Commission in December 2007 after a long tenure.

Please join us on Monday, April 7 to publicly acknowledge Larry's service to our community.

**DOROTHY MIELE, PRESIDENT SO.
PLAINFIELD HISTORICAL
SOCIETY; CHAIRWOMAN, SO.
PLAINFIELD ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMISSION**

To the Editor:

The 2008-2009 proposed Board of Education school budget is about affording our children the best possible education through staff, text materials and providing music, arts, sports and extra curricular activities to help shape them to become well rounded students. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent of schools, the board is increasing staff positions and diligently working on shared services with our Borough Council, which is a promising new venture. Progress is the ability to move forward and forward is the best possible place to be.

The two incumbents running for reelection on the Board of Education, Carol Byrne, who is a master board member, and Tim Morgan, are extremely knowledgeable in current board matters. They not only participate as full board members, but also attend

(Continued on page 10)

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South Plainfield Observer

The South Plainfield Observer is published every Friday

G&G Graphics, Inc.
1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

(908) 668-0010
FAX (908) 668-8819

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Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
Web page:

www.spobsobserver.com
(updated every Thursday)

For subscriptions, advertising or information, call (908) 668-0010.

The publisher is not responsible for typographical errors.

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The South Plainfield Observer (U.S.P.S. 018253) is published weekly, except Thanksgiving week, by G&G Graphics Inc. 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080-2004. Second class postage paid at South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080-9998. POSTMASTER: Forward change of address orders to G&G Graphics Inc. 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080-2004. Subscription rates \$25 per year in South Plainfield; \$30 per year out of town. To subscribe: 908-668-0010.

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 spobsobserver@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: spobsobserver@comcast.net or fax 908-668-8819. Letters should not exceed 200 words. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. It is the editor's discretion to limit the number of letters submitted by one individual on the same subject. The opinions expressed in "Letters" do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the *Observer*. All letters must be submitted with name and phone number, for verification.

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Corporate Accounts Welcome



SPHS Music Boosters MUSIC NOTES

By Pam Hussey

Where were you on March 27? If you're a music lover, you were at the high school enjoying the Music Department's 39th Annual District Music Festival & Art Exhibition. The event, as organized by music team leader Andy Weiss, included music and artwork from Grant School, the middle school and the high school.

During intermission, people perused the halls enjoying artwork, having refreshments in the cafeteria, or watching our Silver Dreams Color Guard perform their routine. While the audience was being seated, the jazz band and Jades men's ensemble entertained everyone. (See page 16 for photos)

Congratulations to the Winter Guard on their stellar performance on March 22 at West Essex High School. The guard earned first place with a season high score of 75.7. Awesome! Their next performance is Saturday, April 5 at Branchburg Middle School. Come out and support the Winter Guard, it's a vibrant event.

Glitterbug Club to Present Children's Program at Library

On Wednesday, April 23 the South Plainfield Clean Communities/Glitterbug Club will present a free children's program entitled, "Whales, the Ocean Environment & Litter" at the South Plainfield Public Library at 6:30 p.m. Registration is required.

Since 1981 the Doves have led whale watch trips and studied whales. Hear some whale tales, take a pretend whale watch trips through slides, enjoy a song or two and explore hands-on items on discovery tables set up on rotating stations.

Upon request, each grade level's marine theme may be emphasized; a brief musical slide show may be included featuring close-up glimpses of a variety of marine life. Students will learn how litter affects marine life and people and ways "Kids Can Help" improve their environment.

For more information or to register, call the library at (908) 754-7885.

LEGAL NOTICE

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD Public Notice

RETURN OF PERFORMANCE BOND

To Michael Ciardiello for public improvements at 1500 Seymour Street, South Plainfield Lot 1.01, Block 458.

A public meeting has been scheduled by the Governing Body of the Borough of South Plainfield to hear objections, if any, to the release of a Performance Bond posted by Michael Ciardiello for public improvements at 1500 Seymour Street in South Plainfield know as Lot 1.01, Block 458 listed on the official tax maps of the Borough of South Plainfield. Said public hearing will be held on Monday, April 21, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 2480 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080.

Michael Ciardiello
1500 Seymour Street
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

\$38.50

April 4, 2008

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY LEGAL NOTICE

March 28, 2008—Public Notice is hereby given that the following action was taken by the South Plainfield Board of Adjustment at its' meeting held on March 27, 2008.

A. Case #34-05—D'Annunzio & Sons, Inc. Block 576A; Lots 16, 16.01, 17-20, Park Avenue. The applicant's request for a use variance was hereby GRANTED subject to additional voluntary conditions.

B. Case #02-08—Arnaldo & Victoria Ferrara, Block 222; Lot 46. 3312 Evergreen Lane. The applicant's request for a shed and garage was hereby GRANTED subject to additional voluntary conditions.

C. Case #03-08—Armi Anne Wilson, Block 166; Lot 32. 570 Harrison Avenue. The applicant's request for an addition was hereby GRANTED subject to additional voluntary conditions.

D. Case #09-08—Dancar Associates Limited Partnership, Block 255; Lot 15. Fleet Avenue. The applicant's request to use the premises as a contractor's storage yard was hereby GRANTED subject to additional voluntary conditions.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Beth Khidre
Secretary/Zoning Board of Adjustment

\$39.90

April 4, 2008

South Plainfield Business Association Participates in Workshop at High School

Members of the South Plainfield Business Association (SPBA) participated in the first annual workshop "Making Work a Habit," on March 28 at South Plainfield High School. The purpose of the workshop was to provide seniors with information that can be helpful when deciding a career. The program was developed by teacher Dee Falato and Debra Leporino, president of the South Plainfield Business Association, along with Elaine Gallo, director of guidance, K-12.

The workshop began with opening remarks by high school Principal Dr. Kenneth May, who welcomed the business leaders and thanked them for participating. Superintendent of Schools Jose Negron and BOE member Debbie Boyle were in the audience observing the panel discussion. Asking questions the students had written was the moderator Paul Cantarella, student leader. Most of the questions were directed toward the careers of the guest panelists. They included educational requirements, the type of hours each worked and if anyone had openings for summer jobs. Questions were also directed to the mayor, police chief, fire inspector and the prosecutor. Students learned that interviews and references are a very important part of the job search. They



Nancy Grennier, publisher of the South Plainfield Observer, answers a students question at the workshop held at SPHS. Also pictured are SPBA members Bob Longo, Joe Abbruzzese and Jack Pedersen look on.

should be fully prepared when applying for a job, learn something about the position, dress the part and look interested during the interview. Panel members noted afterward that they thought the students questions were intelligent and well thought out.

Panelists for the workshop were: South Plainfield Mayor Charles Butrico, Robert Longo, AI, architect at Cornerstone Architectural Group; Nancy Grennier, publisher of the

South Plainfield Observer, Joe Abbruzzese, from the South Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department; Jack Pedersen, realtor at Remax Best Realty; Richard McCrisky, director at McCrisky-Gustafson Home For Funerals; Dr. Tania Otero, veterinarian at Plainfield Animal Hospital; South Plainfield Police Chief John Ferraro; Carolyn Allen, banker at Commerce Bank; Attorney Thomas Lanza, borough prosecutor and Attorney Renaldo Biribin.

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around town

Spaghetti Dinner/ Tricky Tray

April 5

Pilgrim Covenant Learning Center, 3121 Park Ave., is hosting a spaghetti dinner/tricky tray auction on Saturday, April 5 at 6 p.m. Cost is \$6 adults, \$3 children 12 and under and includes salad, bread, pasta, dessert, coffee and tea. Tricky tray auction after dinner.

For tickets call (908) 756-4879.

Rescue Squad/ Stress Factory

April 6

The Stress Factory Comedy Club, 90 Church St. in New Brunswick, will host a fundraiser to benefit the South Plainfield Rescue Squad featuring head comic Vinnie Brand on Sunday, April 6. Dinner served at 5 p.m.; show begins at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased by calling (908) 754-2259 or visit www.stressfactoryentertainment.com for further information.

VFW Country Breakfast

April 6

The South Plainfield VFW will be hosting a country breakfast on Sunday, April 6 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Public welcome. Any questions, call (908) 668-9751.

SP Historical Society Meeting

April 8

The South Plainfield Historical Society will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 8 at the Historical Society Center in the Administration Building, the former Roosevelt School. The meeting room is on the lower level off Jackson Avenue.

What's
happening at the
South Plainfield

SENIOR CENTER

APRIL

UPCOMING
EVENTS

Income Tax Preparation Available
Monday and Thursday 9 am to noon

Golden Isles of Georgia Trip
May 3 through 9

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Crocheting 9:30am-11:30am Yoga 10:30-11:30am Art Class 11:30am	7 Bingo 10am-2pm Ladies Social Group 10am	8 Aerobics 8:45 am Line Dancing 10 am Computer 10 am, 11:30am, 1pm Crocheting 1pm Tai Chi 2pm	9 Pathmark Shopping 9am Crafts Class 10am Computer Class 10am 11:30am, 1pm Exercise Class 1:15pm	10 Bingo 10am-2pm

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

All are welcome. Come and learn some of the history of our town, which was a part of Piscataway in the 1600's.

Blackrose to Perform

April 12

Blackrose, a band performing classic rock and roll music and today's hits, will perform at Tim Kerwins Pub, located on Rt. 28 in Middlesex on Saturday, April 12 at 9:30 p.m.

Boy Scout Troop 207 Spaghetti Dinner

April 12

Boy Scout Troop 207 will hold a spaghetti dinner on Saturday, April 12 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the American Legion located on Oak Tree Avenue. Cost is \$5 for eat-in or take-out.

AARP #4144 Meeting

April 21

Ajanta Vinekar, M.D. will speak on "Diagnosis and Management of De-

mentia" at the AARP Chapter 4144 meeting on Monday, April 21 at 12:30 p.m. at the senior center, located on Maple Avenue.

Glitterbug Club Children's Program

April 23

On Wednesday, April 23 the South Plainfield Clean Communities/Glitterbug Club will present a free children's program entitled, "Whales, the Ocean Environment & Litter" at the library on Plainfield Avenue at 6:30 p.m. Registration is required.

For information or to register, call the library at (908) 754-7885.

SPBA April Meeting

April 24

The South Plainfield Business Association will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, April 24 at 9 a.m. at Sherban's Diner, located on Front Street. Tom Stillman of Stillman Photography will give the "Spotlight on Business Presentation" for this month.

Contact Debra Anne Leporino at SPBAPres@aol.com no later than Friday, April 25 if you would like to be a guest speaker at the May meeting.

Sacred Heart School Tricky Tray

April 26

The Sacred Heart School fourth annual tricky tray, "Wild West Round-up," will be held on Saturday, April 26 in the school cafeteria. Doors open at 6 p.m. and drawing begins at 7:30 p.m. Prizes include gift certificates, electronics, sports memorabilia, baskets, a 50/50 raffle and more. Admis-

sion is \$15 and includes five raffle tickets for basic level section. Coffee, tea and light sweets provided free of charge. Adults only.

For additional information or to purchase advance tickets, contact Susan at (732) 321-0554 or Michele at (908) 757-2523.

— Out of Town —

Piano and Pasta at Willow Grove

April 5

A concert in the grove and spaghetti dinner fundraiser will be held at Willow Grove Presbyterian Church in Scotch Plains on Saturday, April 5 at 5 p.m. in the sanctuary.

For information, call the church office at (908) 232-5678.

Sharing the Quilts XXV

April 5

Terrill Road Bible Chapel will host "Sharing the Quilts XXV" on Saturday, April 5 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call Ann at (908) 755-7653.

Ralph Nader at Stockton College

April 5

The Seventh Annual Environmental Forum at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey on Saturday, April 5 will be highlighted by an appearance by activist and perennial presidential candidate Ralph Nader at 1:30 p.m. in the I-Wing of the Galloway Twp. Campus as part of a full day's schedule of events.

Middlesex WOWs

April 7

Middlesex East Widows Or Widowers will conduct a business meeting on Monday, April 7 at 7:30 p.m. at the Carteret Community Center located at Pershing and Cooke avenues. Light refreshments to follow.

For information, call Dorothy at (732) 541-2174 or Lois at (908) 757-0515.

Woodbridge WOWs

April 9

Woodbridge Widows Or Widowers will conduct a business meeting on Wednesday, April 9 at 7 p.m. in the Children's Room of the main library, Rte. 35, Woodbridge. Light refreshments to follow.

For more information, call (732) 381-3255 or (908) 757-0515.

Howie Mandel to Headline Benefit

April 12

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey announced comedian Howie Mandel, star of the hit show "Deal or No Deal," will be the featured entertainer for the 28th Scholarship Benefit Gala on Saturday, April 12 at Caesars Atlantic City Hotel-Casino.

Call (609) 652-4658 or log onto www.stockton.edu/scholarshipbenefit.

Benefit Bowling/Raffle

April 12

Join us for an afternoon of bowling in a fun, non-competitive format, food, tricky tray and a chance to win a 50" flat panel HDTV on Saturday, April 12 at 2 p.m. at the Woodbridge Bowling Center to benefit the Prodigal Foundation, Inc. Tax-deductible donation of \$30 and entry form enters you into the drawing.

For information, call (732) 636-9200 or visit www.prodigalfoundation.com.

Casino Night

April 12

A "Tropical Island Get Away" themed casino night will be held on Saturday, April 12 from 6 p.m. to 12 a.m. at Our Lady of Mount Virgin School, located at 450 Drake Ave. in Middlesex. Advance tickets are \$40 (until April 8). Tickets at the door are \$45; senior citizens are \$35. Ticket includes dinner and dessert, complimentary drink, initial supply of play money. Seating is limited. 21 or older.

For tickets and information, call (732) 356-6560.



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Mark Twain Brings His "Wit and Wisdom" to South Plainfield

By Michael Duquette

For 56 people at the South Plainfield Senior Center on Sunday, rumors of Mark Twain's death were greatly exaggerated.

The acclaimed American writer and humorist came to life, nearly 98 years after his death, courtesy of David G. Kennedy's one-man performance, "Mark Twain: Wit and Wisdom" sponsored by the South Plainfield Historical Society.

Kennedy, dressed in Twain's impeccable white suit and sporting a shock of graying hair and mustache, captivated the audience with tales from Twain's early days as Samuel Langhorne Clemens along the Mississippi River to his time as writer for the American people in books like "The Innocents Abroad," "Roughing It" and "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer."

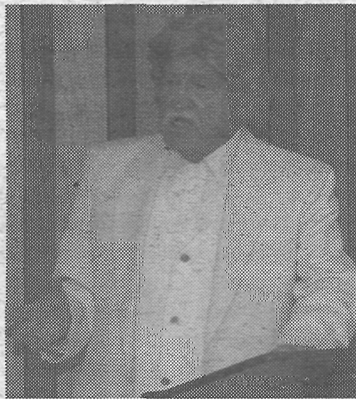
As Twain, Kennedy reflected on the absurdity of discussing so frankly about himself.

"I was born modest in spots," he said. "They quickly wore off."

Clemens, the sixth son of a judge, was often sickly as a child, but lived a life of adventure that seemed to make up for that lost time. He left school at 13 to become a printer's apprentice, taking up the profession in St. Louis four years later, then began work as a riverboat pilot in 1858. It was on the riverboat that he developed his pseudonym, a phrase referring to waters deep enough to safely navigate.

Twain's 1865 short story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," was an instant hit upon publication, and his first book, the European travelogue, "The Innocents Abroad," was published four years later. By the 1870s, he would be writing his best known tales of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, although in his words, the notion of "classic" literature amounted to "something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read."

"I was always nervous about being a famous writer," Kennedy joked as Twain. "Chaucer is dead, Milton is



David G. Kennedy as Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain

dead, Shakespeare is dead and I'm not feeling too well myself."

Though Twain died in 1910, Kennedy as Twain explained he would "come back every once in a while to tell my side of the story."

Kennedy, a theater buff who frequently performs as Twain, Eugene O'Neill and a host of other literary figures, was first inspired to play Twain after seeing Hal Holbrook's award-winning one-man show "Mark Twain Tonight" on television in the 1970s.

"He really was the first man to write colloquially," he said. "Most of the writing [at the time] was very English, refined. He was one of the first to change that."

Kennedy, a student of the Herbert Burghoff Actors Studio in New York City, said he enjoys consistent, if not prominent work.

"I never tried to 'make it,'" he said. "There were 30,000 actors on Broadway. I wasn't interested in being famous, I was interested in doing good work."

The performance was offered through the Horizon Speakers Bureau of the New Jersey Council of the Humanities, with whom the South Plainfield Historical Society has worked with to bring historical re-enactors to the borough before.

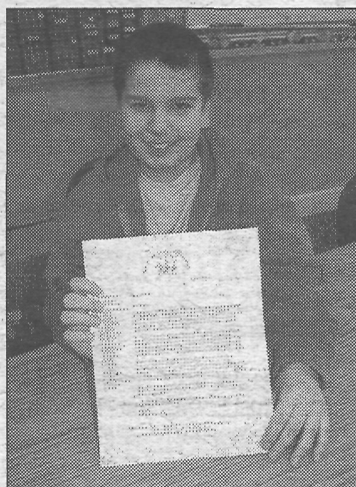
More information about the Historical Society can be found at www.geocities.com/sphistoricalsociety or by e-mailing sphistoricalsociety@verizon.net.

southplainfieldpeople Milestones

Catalina Earns Honorable Mention in NJ Writing Contest

South Plainfield Middle School seventh grader Drew Catalina recently received an honorable mention in the N.J. Center for the Book/Library of Congress Letters About Literature national competition. Drew's language arts opinion essay on John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech was chosen from among 2,000 entries from the state.

Drew's assignment was to research five famous speeches and write a piece reflecting on how the author's theme and intentions still have an effect on the world in today's society. "I felt nervous at first. I get flipped out at essays," said Drew, who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome, a condition that involves delays in the development of many basic skills, most notably the ability to socialize with others, to communicate and to use imagination. He enlisted the help of his grandfather, Michael Faulkner,



Drew Catalina

who is a professor at DeVry University who helped him choose the speech and understand it. "It was a very moving speech that still has meaning today. I am honored to have received an honorable mention.

I was never expecting it," said Drew proudly.

Kristin Bennett, Drew's Language Arts teacher spoke of Drew as "an amazing young man and is an extremely talented writer and speaker. He works hard and preserves, regardless of what he is working on at the moment. He is observant and is able to look deep into the heart of a piece of writing or a conversation. Drew is always ready with a smile, a helping hand, and witty joke, is wise beyond his years and is a role model for other young students." According to Drew he has had "a knack for knowledge" since he was young and he likes to pass it on to his friends.

A statewide reception will be held on Tuesday, June 19 at Winants Hall at Rutgers University in New Brunswick where Drew will receive a certificate signed by Governor Jon Corzine.

Adam Toth Named Who's Who Among Students 2008

Adam Ryan Toth, son of Stephen and Dawn Toth of South Plainfield, who is majoring in biochemistry with a minor in music at Ramapo College, was recently named to the 2008 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

Students included in the annual directory are chosen by campus nominating committees and Who's Who editors for their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities and potential for continued success.

Toth joins an elite group of students selected from more than 2,300 institutions of higher learning in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several foreign nations.

Remarkable students have been recognized in the annual directory since its first publication in 1934.

Toth is a member of the following organizations: Ramapo College Men's Varsity Tennis Team (captain), Pre-medical and Health Club (secretary), Chi Alpha Sigma (vice president) and

the Ski and Snowboard Club. Among the honors he has received are: Presidential Scholarship of Ramapo College, Phi Delta Epsilon (International Medical Fraternity), Omicron Delta Kapp and Chi Alpha Sigma.

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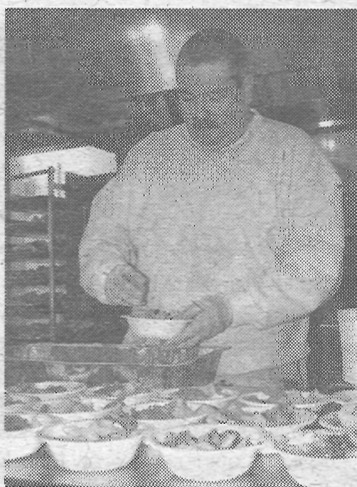
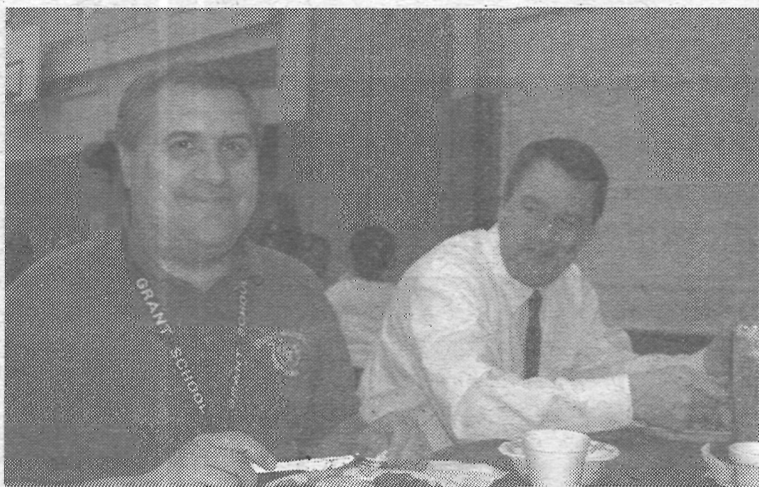
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Grant School Holds Stokes Fundraising Dinner

By Patricia Abbott

Late winter-early spring is prime time for fundraising dinners in South Plainfield. St. Stephen's Church and the Knights of Columbus recently held them. Grant Elementary School was no exception and the community was served a delicious pasta dinner on March 28. The annual pasta dinner is a fundraiser for the current fifth grade classes to raise money for their sixth grade autumn trip to Stokes State Forest. This is the fourth year the school has held this event.

Co-Chair Terry Housel said, "The goal of the committee is not to bring the cost to zero, but simply to reduce the cost. The cost to attend Stokes in 2008 will be about \$130 per student without any fundraising. We were trying to raise between \$10,000-\$12,000 to cut the cost in half. We raised about \$5,000 prior to the pasta dinner, which netted about \$2,500. We have a few fundraisers left, mostly small ones, so it remains to be seen if we make it to the \$10,000 goal." The

Stokes Committee has just one year to raise the money.

The school had a great turnout with about 80 tickets pre-sold, with a total of approximately 170 people in attendance. Among them were Superintendent Jose R. Negron, Assistant Superintendent Fred Oberkehr and Kennedy School Principal Kelly Richkuis. A dozen volunteers were on hand well in advance of the opening to set up, cook and serve the food. The meal consisted of pasta, sauce, meatballs, salad, rolls, and hot and cold beverages, as well as desserts.

Arts and crafts were provided for the youngsters. The event also included a basket raffle. Basket coordinator was Maryann Bythell, with assistance from Terry Housel and Nancy McKenzie.

Housel and McKenzie co-chair the 2008 committee.

Food, drinks and paper goods were donated by Ferraro's in Piscataway, Drewby's Pub in Manville, ShopRite and Restaurant Depot.



Grant Elementary School parents, students and administrators came out in support of fundraising for next year's sixth grade Stokes trip.

Digital LED Display to Replace Vinyl Billboard

Technology brought Clear Channels Outdoors to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to apply for a use variance to convert their vinyl billboard to a digital LED display billboard.

The 14' x 48' billboard, located at 2992 Hamilton Boulevard, is illuminated by lights on each side. The lights will be replaced by Light Emitting Diodes (LED) solid state lighting components made familiar in electronic devices such as the on/off light in VCRs, calculators and stereo systems.

In the presentation, lighting engineer Robert Newell of Westfield listed the advantages of a LED billboard display as opposed to light bulbs because LED provides a more uniform "brighter and crisper" light and because less energy is used is more environmentally friendly.

The new technology allows the billboard to have eight messages appear instantly every eight seconds. Newell also noted that no accidents were caused by the lights during testing of these signs.

Board member Tom Crino asked about the policy and standards Clear Channel uses with its advertisers. Attorney Brian Mulligan of Sterns and Weinroth of Trenton delivered a written document to be read into the record describing the code of the industry which will reject misleading, obscene, sexually oriented and alcohol related advertising. He didn't object to providing a list of advertisers for the board's consideration.

Representatives of Clear Channel noted that the company's public ser-

vice announcements using LED display billboards recently led to the apprehension of a suspect wanted in the shooting of two policemen in Philadelphia. They offered their technology—the ability to quickly put out a digital message—for public service to be utilized in cases of a local emergency, for example if New Market Avenue flooded.

Although the current ordinance prohibits multi-message billboards, board chair William Thomas noted that when the board adopted the present ordinance that was the standard in place. The current state standard postdates the ordinance.

When board member Gino Leonardi left the meeting because of an emergency at home, Thomas gave Clear Channel the choice of having the vote taken with only five board members present (five votes are necessary to approve an application) or delaying the vote until the next session. Clear Channel's representatives asked the board to go ahead with the vote.

The five members unanimously voted to allow the LED billboard display to go forward with conditions—a review of the list of advertisers and the establishment of a contact with a member of the borough's emergency management and/or police department when the need arises to display a public safety announcement on the billboard.

According to Clear Channel representatives, the conversion of the vinyl billboard to LED display will take place within a month.

Childsafe: Free Bully Prevention Seminar

Tiger Schulmann's Mixed Martial Arts of South Plainfield will host a free bully prevention seminar for children and parents of the community. The event will be held on Saturday, April 19 at Tiger Schulmann's of South Plainfield, located in Hadley Shopping Center, from noon to 3 p.m.

The seminar will focus on teaching children basic bully prevention skills through interactive skits, demonstrations and crowd participation for both children and adults, all conducted by the black belt instructors of Tiger Schulmann's Mixed Martial Arts. These fun and educational activities will teach children how to avoid and discourage bullying, what to do when encountering a bullying situation, how to communicate bullying situations to

teachers and family, how to handle physical confrontations and how to be confident in a non-aggressive way. Parents will also be coached on how to identify signs that their child is being bullied, how to keep the lines of communication open on the subject of bullying and will be provided information on bullying resources.

This free Bully Prevention Seminar is part of the Tiger Schulmann's

Childsafe Program, established in 1992 as a program designed to teach awareness about child safety in our communities, and to encourage communication between parents and children about these vital issues.

Parents should call Tiger Schulmann's of South Plainfield at (908) 561-2401 for more information and to reserve space for their child in the seminars.

Curves Invites Members to Join

South Plainfield Curves invites all Slim and Tone Members to join Curves during our 10th annual food drive. Bring in proof of your Slim and Tone membership and a bag of non-perishable food items and pay no

membership fee! All groceries will be donated to South Plainfield's local food banks.

Call or stop by and check out our new CurvesSmart program, the world's most advanced training system! We are conveniently located at the corner of South Plainfield Avenue and Front Street, 27 South Plainfield Ave. Call (908) 757-4422 to get started!

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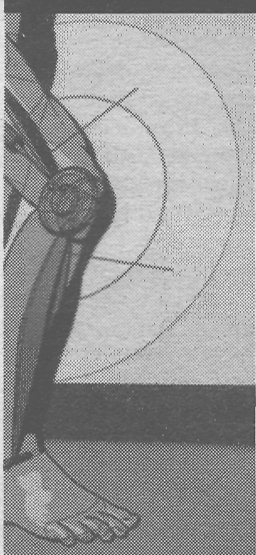
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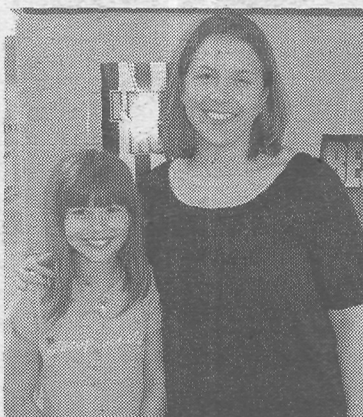
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2007-08 JUNIOR JOURNALIST

Meghan Hughes Named Junior Journalist!



Jr. Journalist winner Meghan Hughes with teacher Kim Broggi.

Meghan Hughes, Franklin School fourth grader, is this week's winner in the Hometown Heros-South Plain-

field *Observer* sponsored 2007-08 Junior Journalist Contest for her essay, "My Special Place."

Meghan will receive dinner for her family courtesy of Hometown Heros. She will also receive a t-shirt. She will be honored at a banquet, along with all the contest winners, on Wednesday, May 14.

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

My Special Place

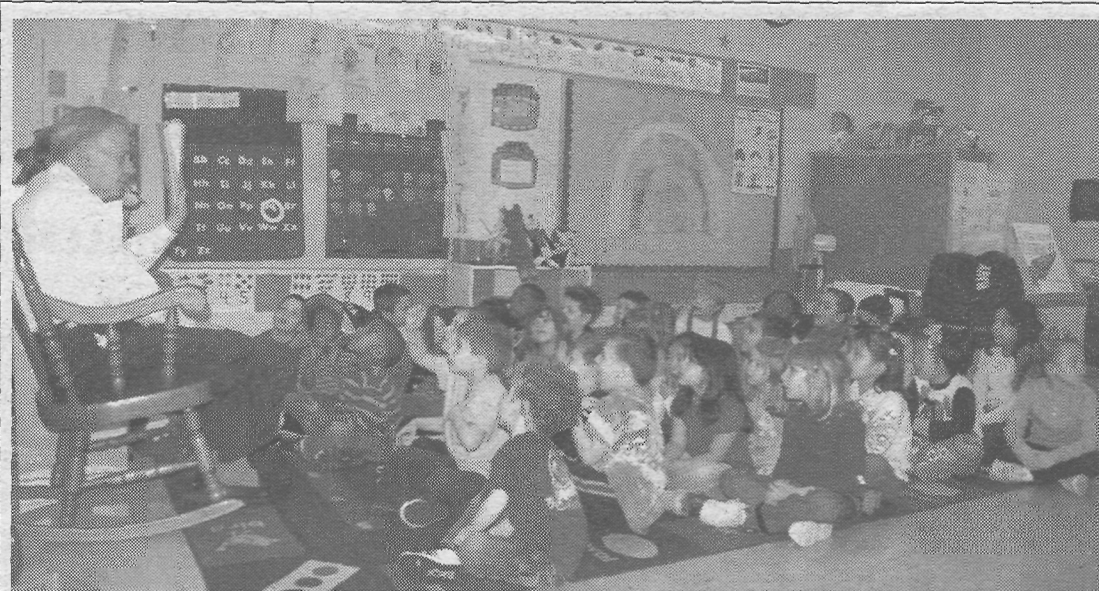
By Meghan Hughes

Everyday after school, I go to my room and think about Meghan's Paradise. It is special because it has things that I like. It has a sport center and a big field hockey field. It has my favorite restaurant, Cheeseburger in Paradise.

The best thing about it is the beach and the clear blue ocean. I like to play in the ocean with my family and friends. After we swim, we have a sand castle competition. My ocean has water slides and huge pool on the sand. Every beach house comes with a flat screen TV. I also have a Jacuzzi big enough for everyone to sit in.

Near the beach is Meghan's Famous Beach Store. It sells jerseys, flip flops, surfboards, sunglasses, chairs, and shell necklaces. It's one of my favorite places to shop.

This is one of my favorite places to be because there is no pressure and it helps me forget about my grades. I also like to go here when I am worried. Meghan's Paradise is great because I am the only one who can see it.



Riley School Principal Al Czech reads Dr. Seuss's "Wacky Wednesday" to kindergarten students dressed for the occasion. Kids wore mismatched socks and shoes, inside out pants, backwards shirts, "wacky" hats, and some in robes and ties. Kindergarten teachers Mrs. Publik and Mrs. Lay joined in the "wacky" fun.

From the South Plainfield Library

Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

We've got two (count 'em, two) special programs set for Sunday afternoon. At 2 p.m., in our main room, author and sports historian Bob Golon will talk about his new book, "No Minor Accomplishment: The Revival of New Jersey Professional Baseball." Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing. And, at 3 p.m. in our Children's Room, Rekha Singh of the Art of Living Foundation will lead the program "Coping

with Stress." She'll teach participants stress reduction techniques, including breathing exercises. This program is for adults and children ages eight and over. Both programs are free; no pre-registration is required.

We'll be following the usual schedule of children's programs next week. For the few of you that need to be reminded, here's what that means: Storytime for children ages three and over, is held on Tuesday morning at 10:30, Wednesday evening at 6:30 and Thursday afternoon at 1:15. Time

for 2's & 3's, for children ages two and three, is held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30. And Books & Babies, for children ages three and under, is held on Friday morning at (what else?) 10:30. Each program lasts about an hour and features songs, stories, and a craft activity for older kids. No pre-registration is required. For more information, please call us and ask for Miss Linda or Miss Mija.

The Library Board of Trustees will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, April 8 at 7 p.m. Members of the public are welcome to attend and learn more about the library's current and future plans, including the proposed new library project and the related "Democracy Week" referendum. There will be a public comment time early in the meeting.

Looking a bit further ahead, we'll host another appearance by certified antiques appraiser Alan G. Snyder on Sunday, April 20 at 2 p.m. He'll provide free antiques appraisals for the public. Participants are limited to two items per person; appraisals will be made on a first come, first served basis. No pre-registration is required.

Later that week, on Wednesday, April 23, we'll host the children's environmental program, "Whales, the Environment & Litter" at 6:30 p.m. Diana Dove of Dove Environmental Education will teach children about whales and the environment through stories, songs and a slide presentation. The program lasts about an hour and is being presented free. Pre-registration is required.

We've recently added a new device to allow patrons to once again view our microfilm and microfiche collections (remember those?). The viewer is linked to one of the word processing computers near the reference desk. For assistance in using the viewer and selecting items from the microfilm/fiche collection, please check with a reference librarian.

Finally, we'd like to announce that we've now ceased our participation with the Audiobook Circuit (and we really mean it, this time!). Patrons will still have access to our own ever-growing audiobook collection, and we can, when possible, obtain titles we lack via Interlibrary Loan. You can also download select titles via our Web site. Please check with reference for further details on this.

That's all we can fit in this week. If you have any questions, give us a call at (908) 754-7885. You can also learn more through our aforementioned Web site: www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us. Catch you next week.

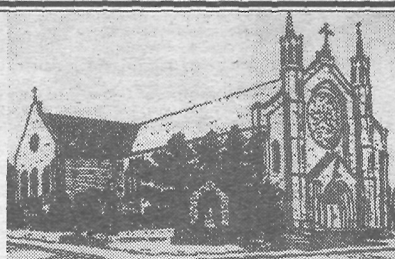
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Sunday 8:00, 9:30, 11:30 a.m.

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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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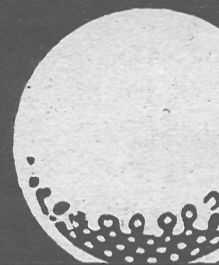
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GIRL SCOUTING IN SOUTH PLAINFIELD



Scouts and leaders of Troop 120 sell cookies in front of Quick Chek.

Scouts Collect for Cookie Drop

Girl Scout Troop 120 from Grant School spent a sunny Sunday afternoon selling cookies in front of Quick Chek on Sampton Avenue to raise money for their trip to a dude ranch in Upstate New York planned for next year. This year Girl Scouts across the country are again participating in Operation Cookie Drop. A donation of \$3.50 sends one box of Girl Scout cookies to soldiers and their families around the world. Since Operation Cookie Drop began in 2003, more than 55,500 packages of Girl Scout cookies have been donated to the military.

If you don't know a Girl Scout but would like to purchase cookies or make a donation, call the Girl Scouts of Washington Rock Council, Inc. at (908) 232-3236 or visit their Web site at www.westfieldnj.com/girl-scouts/ to locate a cookie booth near you.

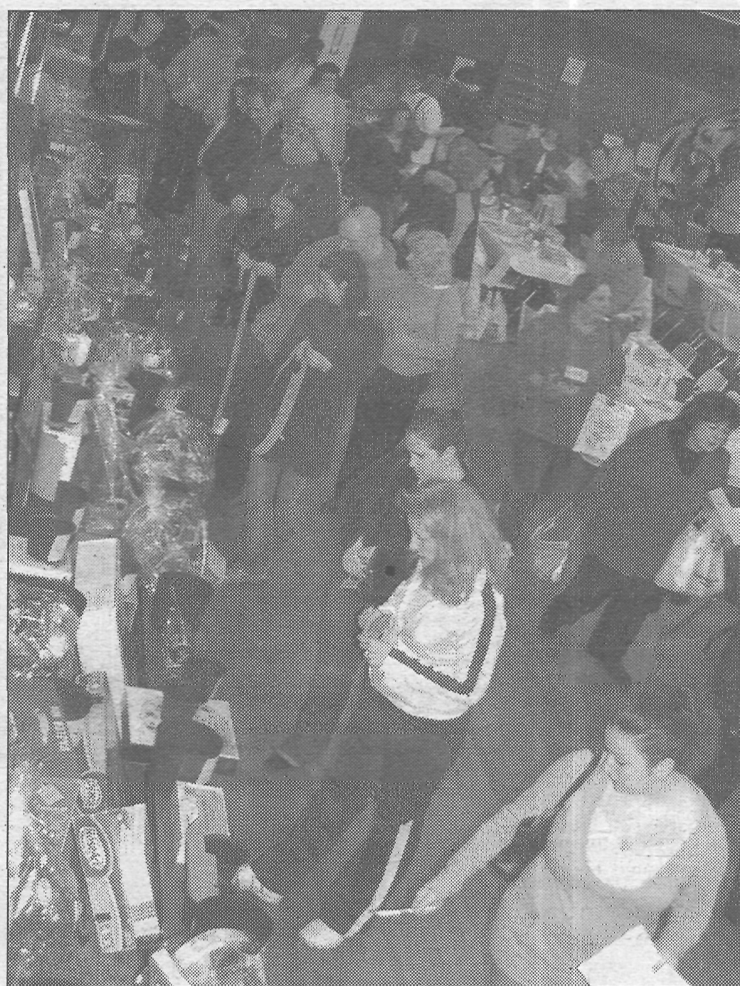
Annual Auction/ Raffle Benefits SPHS Seniors

By Patricia Abbott

It's an auctiongoer's favorite time of year in South Plainfield. SPHS Project Graduation auction and Franklin School's auction/raffle are held a week apart. The fun began on March 8 when the SPHS Project Graduation committee sponsored their annual auction/raffle.

A line of party ready visitors formed almost half an hour before the doors opened. They wasted no time in setting up their tables with a wide assortment of edible goodies to last them through the evening. In order to accommodate the crowd, the number calling began after 7 p.m. Chairman of the Project Graduation Committee was Sharon Miller. Runners for the event were members of the Peer Leadership group as well as other clubs.

One week later Franklin School held their 12th annual auction/raffle. The event was chaired by Jim Colapietro. Runners were volunteers from the high school. Colapietro said, "The high school kids are fantastic!"



Attendees at SPHS Project Graduation view the auction baskets.

Borough to Bond for Road Repairs/Sidewalks

The Borough Council is expected to approve several ordinances at their regular meeting next Monday for improvements to South Plainfield Tompkins and Spicer avenues. The cost of the three projects is approximately \$990,000; the amount of bonding required is \$728,000.

Phase II of South Plainfield Avenue includes improvement to the roadway between Joan Street and Park Avenue. The total cost is estimated at \$360,000, with \$130,000 of the cost to be bonded.

Tompkins Avenue will be improved along its entire length, from Plainfield Avenue to Clinton Avenue. The total

cost is estimated to be \$440,000, with \$418,000 in bonding.

Sidewalks will be installed on the residential side of Spicer Avenue. The total cost is \$190,000, with \$180,000 to be bonded. The ordinance to install sidewalks was tabled when it was introduced earlier this year. However,

Mayor Charles Buttrico admittedly erred by signing the contract before the ordinance was voted on and subsequently the borough is obligated to proceed with the project.

The final vote will be taken at the council's regular meeting which begins at 8 p.m. on Monday, April 7.

Hometown Heros Announces Ruth Kurland Memorial Award

Debbie and Charlie Kurland, owners of Hometown Heros and co-sponsors of the South Plainfield Observer and Hometown Heros Junior Journalist Contest, have announced the creation of the Ruth Kurland Memorial Award.

The award will be given annually to one of the winners from each year's Junior Journalist Contest. The \$1,000 savings bond is intended to be used towards the winner's college education.

Ruth Kurland, Charlie's mom, passed away from leukemia when Charlie was 18-years-old. "My mom was proud of the fact that she

had had a library card since she was four years old. She was never without a book, always checking out several books at a time from the library and returning them in the allotted time and then starting the process over again. Our house was filled with bookshelves of novels and autobiographical works. I can't think of a better way to remember my mom than to recognize and reward a child for reading and writing," said Charlie.

"Deb and I are thrilled about being able to do this. We hope it encourages more children to take part in this program," he concluded.

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IN MY OPINION

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

(Continued from page 2)

student activities supported by the Board of Education. Their presence can be seen at concerts, plays, sports dinners and music and art festivals.

The middle school On the Edge of Your Seat Players Drama Club will perform "The Smartest Woman in the Kingdom and Thumbelina" on Thursday, April 17 and Friday, April 18 at 7 p.m. in the gym. Tickets are \$2 for students and \$5 for adults. Please come and support the students.

**DEBBIE BOYLE,
BOE MEMBER AND PARENT**

Dear Editor

Over the past few years I've had the opportunity to work with former Councilwoman Kathy Thomas to study the financial impact of a new library. The lessening of the fiscal impact to the residents, as well as the fiscal obligation to the town were always a primary goal. My role in the process was always to provide fiscal advice and not evaluate projects need. This letter should continue to reaffirm my role in providing financial advice. The decision on whether to build a new library is up to the Governing Body and the residents of this Borough.

As has been previously noted by Councilman Rusnak, originally the borough hoped to secure 25% of the project funding from the State of New Jersey. As everyone knows, the state is cutting funding everywhere and library construction funding right now no longer exists. This means roughly \$1,000,000 of project funding will now need to be funded by the residents of the borough. This fact was fully known by myself as well as Councilwoman Thomas when we were doing our financial impact studies. Even without this funding there was a desire to proceed with the project because two economic factors seemed to mitigate the loss of state library aid.

The first economic factor was an expected decline in debt obligations in the Fiscal 2010 Budget. This reduction is still expected and it is a material figure. The other economic factor, unfortunately, is significantly variant from what was projected a few years ago. This item is the Borough's ratable base. There was an expectation that the Borough's ratables, and construction, would continue to grow in 2008, 2009 and 2010. As a matter of fact, there was an expectation that the Celebrations Development on South Avenue would nearly be complete and fully added to the Borough's ratable base by SFY 2010. This development alone would increase ratables nearly \$75,000,000. This one development would contribute in excess of

\$750,000 in tax revenue to the borough on an on-going basis.

As everyone knows, the economy is in a tailspin. In 2007 the borough was plagued with a substantial amount of assessment appeals, and the borough's ratable base in 2007 actually declined by approximately \$7,500,000. This was not in any of the forecasts going back a few years ago. I believe these appeals will stabilize in the future, but nevertheless I now expect the Borough's ratables in SFY 2010 will be at least \$50,000,000 below what was being forecast just a few years ago. This letter should not be considered a condemnation on whether or not the borough should or can afford a new library. It is just an accurate summary of past and current facts and events. The notion that borrowing \$4,000,000 will not affect the taxpayers is naive and inaccurate. If the residents or Governing Body decide to borrow \$4,000,000 for the construction of a new library there will be an increase in debt services costs over what currently exists by approximately \$375,000 per year.

If any resident is interested in contacting me please do not hesitate in calling me at (908) 226-7602 or E-mail me at gcullen@southplainfieldnj.com.

**THANK YOU,
GLENN F. CULLEN
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

South Plainfield Residents:

My name is Sharon Miller and I am running for a position on the South Plainfield Board of Education, Line 2. I have lived in South Plainfield for 28 years. I graduated college with a BA degree and after college went to work for a major pharmaceutical/healthcare company where I spent 23 years working in purchasing and special marketing. My husband grew up in this town and graduated from South Plainfield High School. He earned a BS degree in college and has his CPA certification. We have two daughters who began their education in the Future Stars preschool program and have continued through the South Plainfield school system, graduating from SPHS. Both are currently in college.

For the past 16 years, I have been a very involved parent and an active volunteer in our schools and community. Because of my strong involvement in our schools, I have learned how the school system functions at each level. I am currently a member of the SPHS Middle States Planning Team. The Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools accreditation recognizes excellence in educational quality, planning, and growth in student performance. We will be implementing a

five year improvement plan and have been working for the past five weeks on establishing goals, objectives and the means for measurement. Some of the organizations I have been involved with include the SP Parents Ponytail Association, the SP Field Hockey Association, and the PTA. I served several years on the executive boards of each of these organizations. As president of the SP High School PTA for the past three years, I have taken on the responsibility of fundraising for the Project Graduation celebration for the senior class. This is a huge undertaking, which takes six months to plan, organize and execute. We had our 2008 Project Graduation Auction a few weeks ago and I am happy to say it was a complete success with over 440 people in attendance and over \$24,000 raised. In addition, this will be my third year coordinating and running the Project Graduation celebration event for the SPHS senior class. This is an event that takes over three months of planning.

I have also volunteered at numerous other community activities such as Adopt-a-Family and helping to rebuild a house for Habitat for Humanity. Last year when the SPHS Peer Leadership group decided they no longer wanted to use professional organizers to help run this fundraiser, they asked me to help them organize and implement the 2007 Tiger 24/12. I readily volunteered to help them. This wonderful group raised \$20,000 for families in need.

I am seeking a position on the Board of Education because I believe I can make a difference. I want to continue to volunteer for our children and want to give back to our wonderful community. If elected, I will be an advocate for our children. I believe the best gift we can give a child is a well-rounded quality education. It is imperative in this day and age that every child be given the opportunity to receive a good education. We have to address every child's educational needs in order to insure each child has an opportunity to succeed. The best gift we can give to our community, our caring parents, and our wonderful educators, is an effective and financially sound budget.

I will also work to build communi-

cation links between the BOE and our community, parents, our educational staff and administrators. It is essential that our community is well informed, because communication and information builds trust.

Some additional areas I am interested in focusing on are raising the bar on academics, security, stability in our school system, shared services, technology and building maintenance.

To the citizens of South Plainfield and especially the children, if I am elected I will make the same promise to you that I have made to the numerous other organizations I have been involved with. I will be highly motivated, hardworking, deeply committed and dedicated to the position of BOE member and for doing what is right for the children of our community.

I would greatly appreciate your support and vote on Line 2. I also ask for your support of Carol Byrne Line 3 and Tim Morgan Line 4.

**THANK YOU,
SHARON MILLER, LINE 2**

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Muhlenberg Regional Hospital in Plainfield. It has come to my attention that the parent company, Solaris, is petitioning to close it. The loss of this hospital will be a death sentence for hundreds of people every year for the people of Plainfield and the surrounding towns. There is no viable alternative for this area. Plainfield is not Newark or Jersey City or Camden where there are other hospitals just minutes away. The next closest hospital is JFK in Edison which is six miles away and at five in the afternoon is a 45-minute ride at best. Lives that could otherwise be saved could very well be DOA by the time they get there. There is also the matter of all the senior residences and nursing homes that are only minutes away from Muhlenberg. What will they do when immediate care is needed? By the time an ambulance arrives and gets them to the nearest hospital they will be DOA too?

I am fully aware of the need to cut expenses and trim the state's budget, but closing Muhlenberg would be a grave mistake. There are too many

lives at stake and many may be lost without this great hospital, not to mention the jobs and revenue that will be lost as well. Muhlenberg is Plainfield's largest employer and is a town that can ill afford to lose that many jobs. Many of the people employed by Muhlenberg will not be able to find other work, they struggle just to get to the job they have now. Plainfield is not a town that cannot absorb the loss of over 1,000 jobs, it will be devastating to a community that is already struggling to survive.

There is also the matter of whether or not the surrounding hospitals will be able to handle the overflow that closing Muhlenberg will create. From what I understand Solaris has already made it known that JFK will not be able to handle the more than 40,000 ER visits that Muhlenberg treats every year, not to mention the tens of thousands of other non-emergency cases that are treated by this hospital on a yearly basis. Where will these people go? Many of the people that go to Muhlenberg do not have the resources to travel five or 10 miles to find care. Where will they go? Many of the people in Plainfield are also undocumented. Will the surrounding hospitals be able to handle them on top of the thousands of others that the closure of Muhlenberg will send their direction?

Due to circumstances beyond its control Muhlenberg has become what is known as a charity care hospital. It loses money every year, a lot of money, no doubt. What it has not lost is its ability to care for all the people that come through its doors regardless of whether or not they pay, something that is beyond their control. This state cannot afford to lose this hospital; it would only shift the expense elsewhere, in a way that would benefit no one. Keeping Muhlenberg open is not an option, it is a necessity. The love and care Muhlenberg provides cannot be replaced.

**THANK YOU,
ROBERT BUCK**

LEGAL NOTICE

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MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO ABSENT DEFENDANT

(L.S.) STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO: **Robin L. Wells**
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED AND REQUIRED TO serve upon GOLDBECK McCAFFERTY & McKEEVER, A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION, plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Suite 5000 - Mellon Independence Center; 701 Market Street; Philadelphia, PA 19106-1532, phone #(856) 858-3242, an answer to the Complaint, filed in a civil action, in which Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. as Trustee for the Holders of SASCO 2007-MLN1 is plaintiff, and Hristos Karanikas and Mrs. Hristos Karanikas, wife of Hristos Karanikas are the defendant(s), pending in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Chancery Division, Middlesex County, and bearing Docket No. F-1703-08 within thirty-five (35) days after April 4, 2008 exclusive of such date. If you fail to do so, judgment by default may be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. You shall file your answer and proof of service in duplicate with the Clerk of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Hughes Justice Complex - CN 971, Trenton, New Jersey 08625, in accordance with the rules of civil practice and procedure.

This action has been instituted for the purpose of (1) foreclosing a mortgage dated August 11, 2006, made by Hristos Karanikas as mortgagor(s), to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., acting solely as nominee for Mortgage Lenders Network USA, Inc. recorded on August 28, 2006, for Middlesex County in Book 11787, Page 0770 of Mortgages for said County, which mortgage was assigned to the plaintiff, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. as Trustee for the Holders of SASCO 2007-MLN1, by Assignment which has been sent for recording; and (2) to recover possession of, and concerns premises commonly known as 302 Ella Ave., Woodbridge Twp., Avenel, NJ 07001.

If you are unable to obtain an attorney, you may communicate with the New Jersey State Bar Association by calling 1-732-249-5000. You may also contact the Lawyer Referral Service of the County of venue by calling 1-(732) 828-0053. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may communicate with the Legal Services offices of the County of venue by calling 1-(732) 249-7600.

YOU, Robin L. Wells, are hereby made a party defendant to this foreclosure action because of a judgment entered by you against Hristos Karanikas in the Superior Court of New Jersey on May 3, 2001 known as Judgment No. J-075043-2001 and Case No. CS 710284 37B to secure a debt in an amount that varies from date to date, and for any lien, claim or interest you may have in, to or against the mortgaged premises.

Theodore J. Fetter
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JUNIOR JOURNALIST



Charlie and Debbie Kurland deliver dinner to Junior Journalist Thalia Alfaresa with her mom Media, sister Nicole, cousin Jeff and Aunt Emily.

Obituaries

Eugene "Gene" A. Gaiser, 69

Eugene "Gene" A. Gaiser died suddenly on Thursday, March 20 at his residence.

Born in Brooklyn, he had resided in Union where he graduated from Union High School and later graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University with a Bachelor's degree. He continued to pursue his education by working towards earning a Masters degree in Business Administration from Seton Hall University.

Residing in South Plainfield and Califon, he moved to Stuart, Fla. for several years before returning back to New Jersey in 2002.

Gene was honorably discharged in January 1967 from the United States Army Reserves after serving from 1963-1966.

Gene was employed as a sales rep for Fenix Investment & Development, Inc. of Morristown. Prior to, he was part owner of McCarthy & Associates, an employment & staffing company of Parlin. He has also worked for Siemens Corp. and Equitable Financial both located in Edison.

While residing in Florida, Gene was active in the Rotary Club and the local chapter of the ARC.

He is survived by a daughter, Laura Gaiser Richardson of Jackson; his wife Gail of South Plainfield and by a sister Gloria Bono of Florida. He will be missed dearly by his cherished grandchildren Erika and Nicholas Richardson. They were the reason he woke up everyday, beloved pop-pop; always there to play, teach and laugh.

Arrangements are under the direction of the McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals.

Donations may be made in Eugene's name to his grandchildren who meant the world to him. Erika and Nicholas Richardson, c/o McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals, 2425 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield, N.J. 07080.

Harold "Red" W. Boyton, 66

Harold "Red" W. Boyton died on Wednesday, March 26 at home.

Born in Summit, Red was raised in Westfield and resided in South Plainfield for the past 28 years.

He worked as a truck driver and was the former owner of the Reddondel and the H.W. Trucking Co., prior to working with KLK Trucking in South Plainfield.

A veteran of the U.S. Army, Red served during the Vietnam War. He enjoyed working with model cars and

trucks as well as working on the lighting of trucks.

Red was predeceased by two sisters, Sandra and Catherine.

Surviving are his loving wife, Adele (Czaya); two sons, Donald of South Plainfield and Bryon of Ohio and three sisters, Frances and Donna of Florida and Nancy of New Hampshire.

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

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the American Diabetes Association, Center Point II, Suite 103, 1160 Rte. 22 East, Bridgewater, N.J. 08807.

Patrick A. Petrella, 90

Patrick A. Petrella died on Sunday, March 30 at his residence in Punta Gorda, Fla., surrounded by his loving family.



Patrick A. Petrella

Born in Newark, he grew up in Plainfield and resided in Central Jersey until his retirement to Florida in 1982. Patrick was honorably discharged as an ordinance instructor after serving in the United States Army stationed at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland during WWII. After being discharged, he started Petrella Brothers Construction Company with his three brothers, Ralph, Louis and Anthony and later formed an independent company called Compet, Inc.

Patrick was a man of strong religious faith and was a past member of the Nocturnal Adoration Society of Mount Bethel Roman Catholic Church located in Warren and a past member of the Metuchen Country Club. He enjoyed golfing, fishing, traveling and dancing with his wife Louise. While residing in Punta Gorda, Patrick was a communicant of Sacred Heart Parish.

Patrick was predeceased by a sister, Madeline, and four brothers, Ralph, Louis, Angelo and Joseph, who was killed on the beaches of Normandy.

He leaves behind his wife of 66 years, Louise and four children, Joseph and wife Donna of Ringoes, Patrick and wife Kathi of Lumberton, Mary Ann and husband Ray of Punta Gorda, Fla. and Thomas and wife Kathleen of Walworth, Wis. He is also survived by a brother, Anthony of Bethlehem, Pa.; a sister, Doris of South Plainfield, 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

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

In lieu of flowers, send memorial contributions to Saint Jude Shrine, The Pallottines, 512 West Saratoga Street, Baltimore, MD. 21201.

John Kusmick, 84

John Kusmick died on Saturday, March 29 in the Haven Hospice at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in Brooklyn, John was raised in Yonkers. Prior to serving in the Navy during WWII, Mr. Kusmick entered the Civilian Conservation Corps in Connecticut. Upon his honorably discharge in 1945, Mr. Kusmick moved to Plainfield before settling in South Plainfield in 1949.

A member of the American Legion Chaumont Post 243, John worked as a carpenter and in maintenance at Camp Kilmer in Edison for 32 years. Then, he worked in the maintenance division at Watchung Hills Regional High School in Watchung for 11 years, retiring in 1992.

John was a member of the South Plainfield Senior Citizens and a communicant of Sacred Heart RC Church.

He was predeceased by his sister, Rose Keller, who died in 2004.

Surviving are his wife Blanche (Porowski); four sons, Kenneth Kusmick and wife Arlene of Metuchen, Gary Kusmick and wife Joanne of Piscataway, Glenn Kusmick and wife Theresa of the Poconos and Jeffrey of Franklin Park. Also surviving are 11 grandchildren.

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

Eleanor Mikla, 77

Eleanor Mikla passed away on Thursday, March 27 at home. Born in Queens, she has been a longtime resident of Plainfield.

Mrs. Mikla graduated from Plainfield High School in 1949 and from Muhlenberg Nursing School in 1951. She was employed with Dr. Ellis P. Singer, Dr. P.D. Joseph, Dr. Barry Schenk and Dr. Joe Catapano. She was a member of the Plainfield Booster Club for Plainfield High School and the Plainfield Traveling Seniors.

Mrs. Mikla was predeceased by her loving husband of 38 years, John Mikla, who passed away in 1992 and her parents, Anthony and Frances Massaro.

Surviving are four sons, Thomas Mikla and wife Pam of Union, Mark Mikla of Highlands, Paul Mikla of Plainfield and John G. Mikla and wife

Mary of North Plainfield and a sister, Mac Goldweitz of Scotch Plains.

Funeral services were held at the South Plainfield Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Eleanor's name to the J.E.K. Haven Hospice, James St., Edison, N.J. or the American Cancer Society.

Angelina Festante, 88

Angelina Festante of Bartonsville, Pa. passed away on Friday, March 28 at Pleasant Valley Manor Nursing Home in Stroudsburg, Pa.

She was predeceased by her husband, Vincent, who passed away in 1990.

Angelina was born on June 4, 1919 and was the daughter of the late Clement and Rose Approvato of Plainfield.

She moved to South Plainfield in 1951 and to Bartonsville in 1990. While living in South Plainfield, she was an active member of Sacred Heart RC Church. Angelina was a longtime member of the Third Order of the Carmelite Nuns as well as the Blue Army.

She is survived by three children, Dominic Festante, Mary Festante and Vincent Festante; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren and her beloved dog, Luigi.

Funeral services were held at The South Plainfield James W. Conroy Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Angelina's name to Pleasant Valley Manor, 4227 Manor Drive, Stroudsburg, Pa. 18360.

Dith Pran, 65

Dith Pran, the Cambodian-born journalist whose harrowing tale of enslavement and eventual escape from that country's murderous Khmer Rouge revolutionaries in 1979 became the subject of the award-winning film "The Killing Fields," died Sunday, March 30 of pancreatic cancer at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick. Dith had been diagnosed about three months ago.

In May of 2007 Dith visited South Plainfield High School (see the May 25, 2007 issue of the *Observer*). He spoke to social studies students about

his experiences and left a lasting impression on many.

Angela Ahern, 84

Angela Ahern of Dunellen died on March 31 at Care One at Highlands in Edison.

Angela was born in Bridgeport, Conn. and had lived in Piscataway and Edison before moving to Dunellen in 1970. She worked as an executive secretary for Allied Chemical in New York City before retiring many years ago. She was a parishioner of Our Lady of Mt. Virgin Church in Middlesex and St. John's Church in Dunellen and also belonged to the Altar Rosary Society. She was also active in the CYO and taught CCD at St. John's. For about a year she taught second grade at St. Matthews in Edison and was also a Girl Scout leader. Angela did a lot of volunteer work for 15 years at the Villa Maria in Watchung. Her other memberships included the North Plainfield Traveling Seniors and Thursday Senior Bowling.

Surviving is her husband, John; a daughter, Margie Gumina and husband Rick of South Plainfield; a son, John and wife Rachel of Dayton; a sister, Margaret Dickinson of Fairfield, Conn. and four grandchildren, Ricky and Kristi Gumina, Johnny and Joey Ahern.

Visitation will be Friday, 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. at Sheenan Funeral Home, 233 Dunellen Ave., Dunellen. Funeral services will be conducted on Saturday at 8:30 a.m. from the funeral home and will be followed by a 9 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial at St. John's Church. Entombment Resurrection Burial Park, Piscataway.

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Memorial Service for William C. Morgan

A memorial service for William C. Morgan will be held on Saturday, April 12 at noon at the Honesdale Gospel Tabernacle, located at 455 Grove St. in Honesdale, Pa.

Morgan, a longtime teacher at South Plainfield High School, passed away on December 31.

Pastor Stuart Hunt of First Baptist Church of Damascus, Pa. and Rev. Dr. D. Paul Williamson of Honesdale Gospel Tabernacle will speak at the services. It will be open to any who wish to attend.

A luncheon will be served at the Tabernacle following the service.

For information, please contact Kenneth Morgan at (732) 752-6746.

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— Brianna Saffold, Andrew Sanchez, Anthony Santone, Kimberly Schuetz, James Schulkes, Amanda Scofi, Heather Scofi, Riley Sella, Kelly Shea, Mary Simmonds, Kelly Simpson, Olivia Simpson, Emily Smith, Shannon Smith, Emma Sprigle, Zoe Strong, Gregory Sutton, Brianna Swenson, Sabersah Syed

— Rebecca Tallman, Claudia Tantilto, Olivia Tarnawska, Brett Temple, Ryan Temple, Samantha Tercek, Brittany Titus, Kenyan Toro, Dung Tran, Jennifer Truong, Allison Tiyp, Kristopher Valentin Jr., Daniel Vargas, Matthew Vargas, Abdulla Waheed, Khizra Waheed, Joseph Waldrop, Ryan Walsh, William Walsh, Laura Weinberger, Xavier Wilson, Christian Wizada, Lauren Zekas

PLEASE NOTE: Pickups are for any large household items, **excluding** recyclable items, concrete, yard debris and automotive items (see www.southplainfieldnj.com, Recycling & Yard Waste). Debris should be placed at the curb in front of the residence on the Sunday night prior to the week in which the collection is to occur. When possible, items should be either tied or boxed and be neatly placed at the curb. The amount of waste cannot exceed 12 ft. x 3 ft by 3 ft. Apartments and condominium/townhouse complexes are not included in the curbside pickup program.

Sports

Soccer

Submitted by Chris Paez

Bullets Beat Robbinsville 3-0

The U-14 boys traveling soccer team took on the Raptors from Robbinsville last Sunday. The Bullets dominated most of the game, not giving the Raptors a chance to score.

The first goal of the game was scored by Tony Franczak within the first few minutes of the game. The other two goals were scored by Shaun Alers all before the first half was over.

During the second half of the game, the Bullets demonstrated their exceptional passing abilities by playing "keep away" from the opposing team.

The Bullets also include Edgar Callegas, Marc Paez, Zach Noll, Austin Jenkin, Joe Krawiec, Jimmy Gerber, Alex Valladares, Ryan Riccardi, Kevin Flanagan, David Forero, Ryan Marcoux, Anthony Quadrel and Jelani Prah. They have a record this season of one win and one tie. The coaches couldn't be more proud of their teamwork.

The Bullets' next game is home on Saturday, April 12 at the Kenneth Avenue field. Come out and show your support.

Winning Weekend for U-9 Arsenal

Last weekend the boys U-9 traveling soccer team added two more wins to their record this spring season. The first one was on Saturday against the Berkeley Heights Blues.

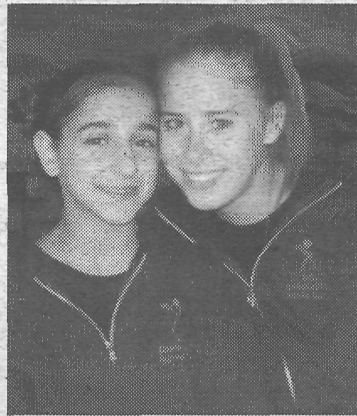
The Blues were an equally matched team that kept Arsenal from scoring until the last minute of the game. That is when Jake Giordano charged the ball after the goalie from Berkeley Heights dropped it to score the winning point.

The second win of the weekend was against the Lawrence Devils. The team was eager to play after the long drive it took to reach the game. The only goal of the game was scored by Jared Marks in the second quarter.

Arsenal, moving up one flight from last season, are now playing against more competitive teams. The team, which includes Jason Cieszkiewicz, Jose Arrubla, Tyler Curtis, Alec Paez, Nicholas Plate, Jake Smith, Nicholas Pezzolla, Jake Hoffman, Samardhi Jeedigunta, Caleb Kuberiet, Jake Giordano, Jared Marks and Ricky Pellegrino, welcome the competition because they know it only makes their team stronger.

Arsenal's first home game this season is Sunday, April 6 at the Kenneth Avenue field at 11 a.m.

Please come out and show your support.



Kayla Yosif and Alexis Alba

Two Qualify for April 11 Regionals

Two gymnasts from Henderson's Gymnastics Academy, Alexis Alba of South Plainfield and Kayla Yosif of Wycoff, competed in the level 9 USA Gymnastics State Championships on March 16. Both girls medalled on individual events and qualified to compete at regionals to be held on Friday, April 11 at Parkettes in Allentown, Pa.

Teammate Michelle Kobilis of South Plainfield was unable to compete due to an injury.

Alexis attends South Plainfield Middle School and is looking forward to competing for the South Plainfield High School in the fall. Kayla attends Wycoff Middle School.

Recreation Wrestling

Submitted by Joe Sacco

Ashnault, Stasenکو Crowned Kid's States Champs

This past weekend several South Plainfield recreation and middle school wrestlers completed their season at the New Jersey Kid's States Wrestling Tournament in Union. Participating for the Tigers was Ryan Walsh, Danny Hedden, Christian Gonzalez, Anthony Ashnault, Kyle Brady, Dylan Painton, Joey Pellegrino and Corey Stasenکو.

In the Junior division at 75 lbs., Anthony Ashnault won his sixth consecutive state championship. Anthony

scored two falls, a technical fall and a 15-1 decision in the finals for his first place finish. At the 112 lb. weight class, Corey Stasenکو scored a fall and three major decisions for his first state title. Finishing in third place at 85 lbs. was Dylan Painton with five wins and in seventh place was Kyle Brady at 80 lbs. with three wins. Representing South Plainfield in the Midget division was Ryan Walsh with three wins, Christian Gonzalez with two wins and Danny Hedden with one win.

By Gary Lampasona

JUNIOR BASEBALL CLUB NOTES

Opening day is finally here! After the long cold winter, baseball will brighten our days and warm our hearts. Come and join us as we celebrate the return of "America's Pastime."

The festivities commence at 10 a.m. with a parade from Roosevelt Elementary School. The new route goes from Hamilton Boulevard, down Belmont Avenue to Kenneth Avenue into the SPJBC Complex. See the South Plainfield High School Band, fire trucks, rescue squad and police vehicles. Let's

not forget the kids dressed in uniform who will proudly display their team banners.

Immediately following the parade, opening ceremonies will be held at Field 2 with a few surprises... then it's time to play ball!

So come on down for an enjoyable day. Don't forget to bring your cameras, we'll supply the smiles.



Ponytail Softball Batters Box

Calling High School Senior Girls—It's Scholarship Time

As you may or may not know, the Parents' Ponytail Softball Association is sponsoring three \$750 college scholarships. Applications are currently being accepted and can be obtained from the South Plainfield's High School guidance office.

To qualify for the scholarships, the applicant must be a high school senior graduating this June and a current resident of South Plainfield. To qualify for one of the two recreation scholarships, applicants must have played for a minimum of four years in the South Plainfield Recreation Department's Ponytail Softball League. To qualify for the Ponytail All-Star scholarship, applicants must have played South Plainfield Recreation softball for a

minimum of four years and South Plainfield Ponytail All-Stars for a minimum of three years. All-Star players may apply for both the recreation and All-Star scholarships; however, a player is eligible to receive only one scholarship. The application must be received no later than Friday, May 2.

All completed applications should be mailed to SPPPA Scholarship, P.O. Box 441, South Plainfield, N.J. 07080 or returned to SPHS guidance office in a sealed envelope labeled "SPPPA Scholarship." Verification of school enrollment is required prior to funds being awarded. Get your applications and hand them in as soon as possible. Best of luck to all of you. You are all winners in our books.

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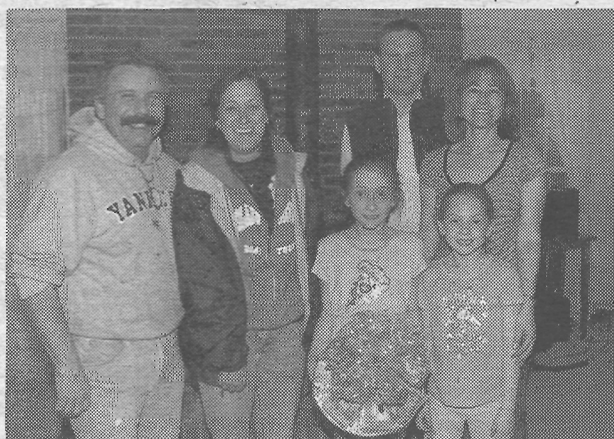
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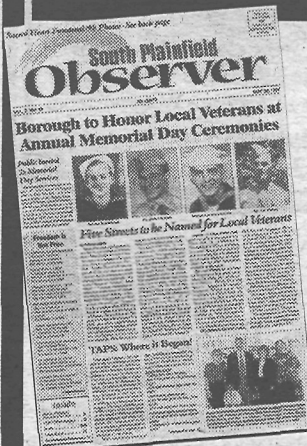
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2007-08

JUNIOR JOURNALIST



Charlie and Debbie Kurland deliver dinner to Junior Journalist Emma Regan pictured with parents Gloria and Thomas and sister Sarah.



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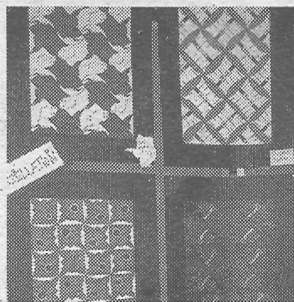
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ALL DISTRICT FESTIVAL—A CELEBRATION OF

Art & Music



By Patricia Abbott

South Plainfield Schools joined together on March 27 to present the community with the 39th annual All District Music Festival and Arts Exhibition. The event was an explosion of music: vocals, instruments and dance (Winter Guard) as well as an impressive assortment of artwork.

The program opened with "The National Anthem" sung by Kathleen Vincent and Lainie Harris, along with opening remarks by Superintendent Jose Negron. The orchestra portion began the program and included the Grant Elementary String Ensemble conducted by Diane Lee with Joan Stasio as accompanist; middle school Gems, conductor Donna Markiewicz, Frank Jacobson as accompanist; middle school orchestra, conductor Sarah Bruce; SPHS's Jades, Tracy Glenn Murray, conductor; and high school orchestra, Bruce Mikolon, conductor.

In between groups and at intermis-

sion, guests had the chance to view the large display of artwork by students throughout the district. The choral program began after intermission, featuring Ashleigh Gray singing "The Star Spangled Banner" and began with the Grant Elementary School chorus directed by Joan Stasio, Paul Di Dario accompanist; middle school



concert choir conducted by Donna Markiewicz and accompanied by Frank Jacobson; SPHS Chorus, conducted by Tracy Glenn Murray, Frank Jacobson, accompanist. The Winter Guard also performed during the course of the evening.

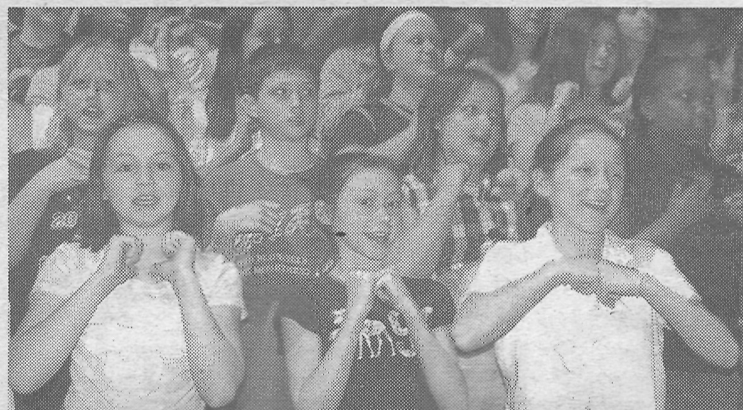
The festival's roots can be traced to 1969 when Peter Franks, SPHS choral director, and David Haining, high school band director, arranged a concert that combined both Cedarcroft Junior High and the high school. In 1970 a few select elementary students were chosen from each school to form an elementary chorus and band. (This was deleted from the program when the new Grant Elementary School opened.) The 1970 event that featured both the junior and senior high and the elementary schools was held on March 14 and was named the South Plainfield District Music Festival, paving the way for today's concert.

The art exhibition was added to the program in 1991, and gave the public the opportunity to view the work of young artists from all grade levels.

The concert began in the former high school (now the middle school), then moved to the high school auditorium, and subsequently to the gym. In 2004 it was moved back to the auditorium to offer a higher level of performance for students and to provide a superior concert experience for students as well as parents.

In 1970, 349 students performed in the old high school and played to a packed house. In comparison, this year's concert featured over 600 students.

While attention to athletics oftens dominates school activities, the arts—both performing and visual—are quickly catching up. This annual festival demonstrates the vast amount of performing and visual arts talent of South Plainfield students.



Basket of Cheer Raffle to Benefit Library

The South Plainfield Friends of the Library are holding a basket of cheer fundraiser, donated by Buy-Rite Liquors of South Plainfield. Raffle tickets are on sale at the library. The bas-

ket will be raffled on Sunday, April 20 at 4 p.m. Winners need not be present to win. Proceeds of the raffle will be given to the South Plainfield Library Building Fund.

Benefit Performance of "Twelve Angry Jurors"

A special benefit performance for UNICO of "Twelve Angry Jurors" presented by ActIV Productions will take place on Sunday, April 3 at 13 p.m. The cast includes South Plainfield

residents Bill and Brian Cochrane as well as Renato Biribin. Tickets are \$15.

For tickets, contact Robert Bengivenga (908) 753-1383 or Renato Biribin (908) 561-9898.

OBSERVER WEB POLL RESULTS

Although the school budget makes up the majority of the local tax bill each year, school board elections fail to draw a large percentage of eligible voters.

In 2007, 78% of school budgets were passed statewide, compared to 53.4% in 2006. Why are taxpayers so complacent about how their school system is run?

Our Web poll results show that 71% of those who responded to our poll plan to vote in the election on April 15 (only 38 people voted—27

voted yes and 11 no). In 2006 only 15.7% of eligible voters turned out to vote statewide (most recent year for which figures are available, consult http://www.njsba.org/press_releases/ase-facts-figures.htm).

Do you plan to vote in this year's school board election? 29% of those who responded to our Web poll said they were not planning to vote on April 15.

Remember, it doesn't matter who or what you vote for, just get out and exercise your right to vote.

NEXT WEB POLL: www.spobserver.com

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