

Borough Reorganization meeting Saturday, January 2, at senior center at noon.

South Plainfield Observer

NEW YEAR

Greetings

VOL 13, NO. 17

Member New Jersey Press Association

60 CENTS

JANUARY 1, 2010



Riley School (left) and SPHS (right) get the community in the holiday spirit. For stories, see page 10.



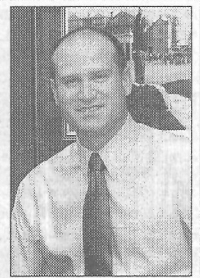
Republicans to be Sworn in Jan. 2

On Saturday, Jan. 2 when Matthew Anesh and Rob Bengivenga take the oath of office, the Republicans will regain voting control of the Borough Council, holding a 4-2 majority. This will be Anesh and Bengivenga's second three-year term as councilmen after losing re-election last year to Democratic newcomers

(Continued on page 3)



Matthew Anesh



Robert Bengivenga, Jr.

LOOKING BACK

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The Year in Review

*The Observer takes a look back
at the stories that made news in 2009.*

Former VFW Commander Rudolph "Rudy" Poczak Dies



Rudolph "Rudy" Poczak, 76, died on December 23. Rudy was an active member of the South Plainfield Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Post #6763. He served with the utmost dedication to the post for many years.

Newcomers to Join Council

The Democrats took back control of the council at the 2009 Reorganization Meeting when newcomers Chrissy Buteas and Franky Salerno took the oath of office. The 2009 council is made up of four Democrats and two Republicans. Last year the Republicans held a 4-2 majority on the council. Former councilmen Rob Bengivenga and Matt Anesh were recognized for their service on the council.

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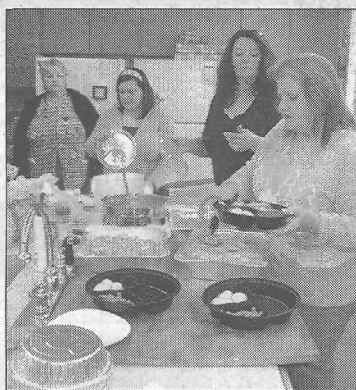
The Year in Review

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Resident Shirley Thompson (right) packages one of more than 200 meals she prepared with the volunteers who assisted her. Thompson's annual Christmas project also provided over 800 gifts to local children. The dinners and gifts were delivered by volunteers.

Ordinance Restoring Weight Restrictions Introduced

Two ordinances were introduced during the first Borough Council meeting of the year. The first was to rescind the ordinance the Republican-controlled council passed in 2008 lifting the weight restriction on Hamilton Boulevard and Belmont Avenue. The second was to terminate the professional services contract with Peter Oudo, who was hired to initiate litigation against former borough attorney, Patrick Diegnan.

SPHS Freshman Attend Historic Inauguration

South Plainfield High School freshmen Ashley Linick and Kathleen Vincent joined 7,500

other outstanding high school students from across the United States to take part in a truly American celebration—the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States.

Linick and Vincent were nominated by their teachers after participating in the National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2008.

Accident Forces Closures of Hamilton Boulevard/ New Market Intersection

A tractor trailer rolled over at the intersection of New Market Avenue and Hamilton Boulevard on January 15. As the truck turned from eastbound on New Market Avenue on to southbound Hamilton Boulevard, the load shifted and caused the trailer to overturn on its left side.

There were three other vehicles involved that were stopped at the traffic signal northbound on Hamilton Boulevard at New Market Avenue, but no major injuries were reported. The intersection was closed for approximately four hours.

BOE to Appeal State Ruling

After a year and a half and three audits, the Board of Education received answers to questions surrounding alleged "inappropriate business practices" by former Business Administrator Donna Tolley which occurred during the school fiscal year July 2006 through 2007.

The State of New Jersey Department of Education Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance Investigations Unit report showed more than \$4.6M unaccounted for, encompassing 600 checks in the final days of the June 2007 budget. The state is asking the board to refund \$27,654.06 in state aid. The board voted to appeal the decision.



Second Annual Festival of Cultures Celebrates Diversity

On January 19, Martin Luther King Day, the South Plainfield Coalition of Cultural Diversity held the second annual Festival of Cultures. Mayor Charles Butrico was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his continued support of the coalition.

In his welcome speech Rev. Nehemiah Thompson said, "This event has a significance today because of the inauguration of the first African-American president. All over this nation American people are grappling with this new phenomenon called diversity in small towns and villages and redefining the nature of the American society. It is being done to the exclusion of no one and to the inclusion of all."

*Please turn to page 5
for more Year In Review.*



Want home delivery of the Observer? Call 908-668-0010 or Email spobserver@comcast.net.

*You're
Invited!*

The South Plainfield Reorganization Meeting takes place at the senior center on Saturday, January 2 at noon with reception to follow at the American Legion. The public is invited to attend!



Want to stay informed but can't make it to borough council or BOE meetings?

Council meetings air on Comcast Channel 96 Mondays at 7 p.m. (Check Comcast community bulletin board for last minute time changes.) To purchase a complete copy of a council or BOE meeting, contact the Observer. BOE Meetings air on Thursdays at 7 p.m. Please note: Meetings are now broadcast on Channel 96.

council meetings

Meets twice a month on Mondays, *except where noted.

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

Agenda Meeting Public Meeting

To be announced after reorganization meeting

All Agenda Meetings begin at 7 p.m. followed immediately by the Public Meeting, unless otherwise noted. Meetings of the Governing Body are held in accordance with the N.J. Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) in the Council Chambers at 2480 Plainfield Ave.

planning board

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

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

zoning board of adjustment

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

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

board of education

Meets Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. *except where noted.

Committee of the Whole: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, March 10 and March 31

Regular Public Meeting: Jan. 20, Feb. 16, March 17 and April 14

BOE curriculum/technology/student activities

Meets once a month on Wednesdays at 4 p.m. in 2nd floor conference room, Roosevelt Administration Building on Jackson Ave.

Jan. 6, Feb. 3, March 3 (April to be announced)

BOE buildings & grounds

Meets second Monday of the month at 7 p.m., 2nd floor conference room, Roosevelt Administration Building—Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 8

recreation commission

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

taxpayers advisory group

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

site plans sub-committee

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

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The South Plainfield Observer (U.S.P.S. 018253) is published weekly, except Thanksgiving week. 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 \$29.95/year in South Plainfield; \$34.95 year out of town.

SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES

We encourage the submission of stories and photos. To get an article published: Type (double spaced) the article and mail, email or fax. Include name, address and telephone number. **Deadline for submission is Monday, 5 p.m.**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Submit letters to the editor by mail, email or fax. Letters should not exceed 200 words. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. Letters must include name and phone number, for verification.

To comment on the content or to suggest a special story idea, contact the publisher at (908) 668-0010.

The publisher is not responsible for typographical errors.

Erika Lynn Foundation Receives Community Grant

The Erika Lynn Foundation received a \$1,000 Community Grant Award from Wachovia Bank, Oak Tree Avenue branch, at a breakfast at the Pines Manor in Edison on December 10. The event included members of 38 other charities in the area. The foundation generously donated the money to Easter Seals.

Mike Dixon is co-founder of the The Erika Lynn Foundation, named for Dixon's daughter who suffers from autism. The foundation is a non-profit organization that generates needed resources for institutions that serve children with mental or physical handicaps. Through the collection of clothing, shoes, toys and books from the public and private sectors, the organization arranges the resale of these items to wholesalers throughout the country. A percentage of the sales is donated to charities for children with autism, Asperger Syndrome, cancer and other childhood disease organizations that need help.

Celebrating their one year anniversary, the foundation was a sponsor of the Old Timers Motorcycle Club Run



Pictured with Mike Dixon are (L to R) Wachovia Bank Branch Manager Carolyn Chirico, Sr. Financial Center Manager Elaine Bladon, Retail Bank Director Maria Ferreira and Community Affairs Manager Deborah Smith.

for the Children Battling Cancer, made holiday donations to the borough's Social Services Department and participated in a clothing exchange with Elijah's Promise and Making It Possible to End Homelessness, both located in New Brunswick.

Dixon would like to thank Dick DeAndrea for all of his help, Montrose Molders, Moretti Realty, Sher-

ban's Diner, Café Everest Diner and Our Lady of Czesstochowa Church for allowing clothing bins to be placed on their property, and the residents of South Plainfield for their donations and continued support.

Donations can also be made in person at the Erika Lynn Thrift Store, 2601 Hamilton Blvd. For more information, call (908) 548-8066.

In My Opinion

Opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the publisher, nor do we guarantee accuracy.

Dear Editor,

As a full time coin dealer and scrap gold buyer, I just would like to thank everyone for their patronage in 2009. Together, we combined to raise \$185 each for the South Plainfield Girl Scouts, Autism Speaks and the Michael Pepe, Jr. Foundation.

I am available to raise money for your group or organization. My advertisements appear in the *Observer* each week. Please go to my Web site at www.gynandroidhead.com for more information.

THANKS,
GREG HEIM

To the Editor:

I would like to commend all the district principals, administrators, students, teachers and staff, South Plainfield High School Guidance Counselor Eileen Boettger, high school student counselor advisor Tony Encinas, student council advisor Jessica Marconi-Kraskowski, The Boyle Memorial Foundation and 2009 graduate Erik White for opening your hearts to the Adopt-A- Family program throughout the district.

The high school adopted six families who received numerous holiday gifts donated by teachers/staff through fundraising events, including "Friday Jean Day" organized by the teachers/

staff which helped to fund the purchase of a computer that was requested on one of the families' "wish list." The teachers, staff, students and the committee donated many of the items.

The teachers and staff are involved all year in various fundraisers which benefit families in need. Erik White, who co-coordinated the events, also participated in the purchase of various items, as well as standing in line to purchase the computer and help in the delivery.

The Adopt-A-Family recipients were overwhelmed by the deliveries of holiday gifts, which also included many gift cards.

Thank you to Marge Ackerman of the South Plainfield Social Services Department for all her help, and SPHS Principal Dr. Ken May for allowing these programs to continue at the high

school. Thanks also goes to all school principals for participation in their respective schools' programs; the SPHS Athletic Department, along with coaches and students who donated to the Toys for Tots program, and the BOE office personnel. As the saying goes in South Plainfield, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going," and the daily giving from the heart program continues.

Thank you again to all those who cook, including Shirley Thompson, Suzanne and Bill Buttrico, and all those who lend them a hand to ensure individuals in need of hot meals receive them, and to Sodexo for the donation of turkeys.

Thank you and a healthy and happy new year to each and every one of you.

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MEMBER: Early American Coppers Club, Numismatic Literary Guild, New Jersey Numismatic Society

Eligible Residents Can Get Free H1N1 Vaccines at Regional Clinic

The Middlesex County Public Health Department will administer 5,000 H1N1 vaccinations to individuals within specified target groups from 2 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 7 at the PAL Building, 1250 Maple Ave.

Eligible persons include pregnant women; household contacts and caregivers for children younger than six months; healthcare and emergency medical services personnel; all people ages two through 49; and persons 49 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

Please note: Children under 10 need two doses of the H1N1 vaccine at least 28 days apart.

Nasal and injectable vaccines will be available for those within the target groups.

Borough students have been sent home with a consent form. Parents must bring the signed form and accompany their children in order for them to receive shots.

Visit www.co.middlesex.nj.us/publichealth/fluclinics.asp to download consent forms. Filling out the form in advance will reduce wait times.

Residents with general questions about H1N1 or the vaccine can call the N.J. Dept. of Health and Senior Services toll-free information hotline from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Sunday at 1-866-321-9571.

Republicans to be Sworn in Jan. 2

(Continued from page 1)

Chrissy Bureas and Franky Salerno.

Anesh and wife Kimberly have twin boys, Harrison and Joseph. He is employed as a vice president at Bank of America, Merrill Lynch. He serves on the Public Celebrations Committee, is a lifetime member of the Historical Society, a recreation youth baseball coach, on the Hopewell Responsible Citizenship Committee and is a C.E.R.T. member.

While on the council, Anesh was instrumental in developing the Safe Streets, Safe Kids pilot project, which helped to reduce speeding near schools and in residential neighborhoods.

Bengivenga is a sales manager at Marpal Disposal. He is a member of UNICO National, Plainfields' Chapter and Brian Piccolo Award and Scholarship co-chair; a lifetime member of the Historical Society, and a member of the Sons of the American Legion and Italian-American Club.

As council president in 2008, he worked to develop a shared services program with the school district.

In their three years on the council, Anesh and Bengivenga helped to cut borough spending by \$500,000 and borrowing by two-thirds; added over 100 handicapped ramps; reconstructed South Plainfield, Tompkins and Linden avenues and Menuchen Road; established a bipartisan ad hoc committee to devise a truck bypass; reinstituted Democracy Day; obtained \$180,000 police communica-

tions grant from the federal government; revised procedures for hiring professionals, and in doing so, reduced professional services costs.

Beginning their term this year in the council majority, Anesh and Bengivenga say they plan to control both long- and short-term spending. "Some of the ways to do this include working with the school board on shared services, getting the tax-appeal program back on track and combining and eliminating unnecessary administrative jobs," explained Bengivenga.

Both councilmen say they want to work to prevent the addition of over 700 rental apartments on New Brunswick Avenue and over 300 new housing units on the old Tingley Rubber site. "These two projects are the biggest threat to South Plainfield as we know it. They'll bring more traffic; they'll strain our emergency services and they'll bring hundreds of new kids into our schools—all at a time when we can't afford it," according to Bengivenga.

"I will continue, and enhance, the Safe Streets, Safe Kids program. We will be looking at new ways to control dangerous speeding in our neighborhoods and to make the areas around our schools safer," said Anesh who also intends to focus on low-cost programs that benefit families and neighborhoods. He continued, "In 2008 we revitalized Cotton Street Park, restored deteriorating curbs in several neighborhoods and repaved key roads. In 2010 we want to focus on the same types of plans, but they have to be things that will fit within our budgetary constraints."

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southplainfieldpeople Milestones

Karen Verderese Weds Eric Seiz

Eric Seiz, son of Thomas and Linda Seiz, and Karen Verderese, daughter of Joseph Verderese and Carol Verderese, were married on September 19 at St. Philip the Apostle Roman Catholic Church.

Martin Seiz was best man for his brother, and Deanna Barrett, the bride's cousin, was maid of honor.

A highlight of the reception occurred as the couple was introduced and they entered performing the song *Let's Get It Started*.

The bride, a graduate of Clifton High School and Bloomsburg College, Pa., is employed by New York Life Investments in Parsippany.

The groom is a South Plainfield High School graduate and a graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston, Mass. He is a professional musician.

After a honeymoon in the Bahamas, the couple reside in Basking Ridge.



Mr. and Mrs. Eric Seiz

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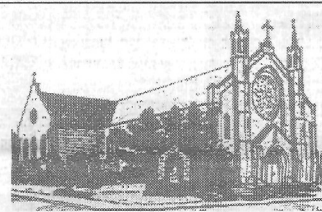
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Around Town

2010 Borough Reorganization Meeting January 2

The Borough Council Reorganization Meeting will be held on Saturday, Jan. 2 at noon at the senior center. A reception will follow at the American Legion. All are invited.

VFW Country Breakfast January 3

The VFW, located on Front Street, will hold a country breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 3 from 8 to 11 a.m. The public is welcome.

For more information, call (908) 668-9751.

Math Genie Program at Library January 3

There will be a special program on the "Math Genie" system at South Plainfield library on Sunday, Jan. 3 at 2 p.m.

The program will introduce parents to "Math Genie," a method of teaching children, from toddler to pre-teenage, mathematics using both a logical and creative focus. This program is being presented free of charge; no pre-registration is required.

For more information, please call (908) 754-7885.

Library Board of Trustees Meeting January 12

The next meeting of the South Plainfield Library Board of Trustees will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held at the library.

The meeting will include discussion

of the library's current and future plans, including matters of library policy and needed improvements of library services and facilities. It will also serve as the annual Reorganization Meeting, involving the appointment of board members and assignment of duties. Members of the public are invited to attend this important meeting; no pre-registration is required. There will be a public comment period early in the meeting.

— Out of Town —

Singles "Dress Down" Dance Party January 2

Steppin' Out Singles is hosting a "dress down" dance party—neat jeans OK on Saturday, Jan. 2 at 8 p.m. at the Woodbridge Hilton in South Iselin. Ages 40 and up; \$15 admission.

For information, call the 24 Hour Hotline (732) 656-1801.

St. Helen's Caregiver Support Group January 4

The Caregiver's Support Group, held in St. Helen's Parish Center, located at Lamberts Mill Road in Westfield, will meet on Monday, Jan. 4, at 8 p.m.

The support group for those caring for elderly or chronically ill loved ones meets on the first non-holiday Monday of each month.

For more information, please call Marilyn Ryan at (908) 233-8757.

NAMI Discussion and Speaker Series January 4

NAMI-Middlesex, an affiliate of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, monthly speaker series will be held on Monday, Jan. 4 from 7-9 p.m. at University Behavioral HealthCare, 671 Hoes Lane, Rm. D201 in Piscataway.

For more information, call (732) 745-7409.

Middlesex East WOWs Meeting January 4

Middlesex East Widows Or Widowers will conduct a business meeting on Monday, Jan. 4 at 7 p.m. at the Carteret Community Center, Pershing and Cooke avenues in Carteret. Light refreshments to follow. All widows and widowers are welcome to attend.

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

Hunterdon Chamber Networking Breakfast January 6

Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce presents Leads Exchange, a networking breakfast (first Wednesday

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SENIOR CENTER Calendar

Coming Up....

MONDAYS
Silver Sneakers 8:30 am
Crocheting 9:30-11:30 am
Yoga 10:30 am
Art Class 11:30 am

TUESDAYS
Bingo 10 am-2 pm
Ladies Group 10 am

WEDNESDAYS
Aerobics 8:45 am

Line Dancing 10 am
Computer 10 am, 11:30 am, 1 pm
Crocheting 1 pm
Tai Chi 2 pm

THURSDAYS
Active Seniors 8:30 am
Shopping Trip 9 am
Crafts Class 10 am
Computer 10 am, 11:30 am, 1 pm
Exercise Class 1:15 pm

FRIDAYS (Closed New Years Day)
Bingo 10 am-2 pm

Daily Activities: Morning coffee, pool, cards, board games, computer classes, exercise, art, Tai Chi, yoga and crafts. Lunch Served Monday-Friday.

Call (908) 754-1047 for more info or visit www.southplainfieldnj.com/SeniorCenter
2009 dues are due—\$10 membership

Senior Center is open daily 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Closed Saturdays and Sundays

of every month) on Wednesday, Jan. 6. Registration at 7:45 a.m. at the Hampton Inn, 6 Frontage Dr. in Clinton. Continental breakfast; free admission; bring a friend.

To register, call (908) 782-7115 or visit www.hunterdonchamber.org.

Red Cross Family Fitness Challenge January 16

The Tri-County Red Cross and Cranford Chamber of Commerce are partnering to help local families get and stay healthy in the New Year, while at the same time raising funds to provide local disaster relief. The Saturday, Jan. 16, kick-off to the Red Cross Resolutions Gym-A-Thon will include educational presentations from local businesses, boot-camp style fitness activities from The NJ Challenge, and a chance to sign up to support the

Red Cross in Union, Somerset and Middlesex counties in New Jersey. The program kicks off at 11 a.m. at the Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Avenue in Cranford.

Information and sign up forms are posted at tricityredcross.org/gymathon.

Mass for Racial Harmony January 17

The Diocese of Metuchen will hold a Mass for Racial Harmony on Sunday, Jan. 17 at noon at St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral in Metuchen.

The Most Rev. Edward T. Hughes, Bishop Emeritus of Metuchen, will be the principal celebrant and homilist at the Mass. Bishop Martin D. Holley of the Archdiocese of Washington will be the guest homilist.

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Kenneth LaFreniere Dies at 68



South Plainfield is mourning the loss of longtime resident Kenneth E. LaFreniere, 68, who died on January 27 after a short illness. LaFreniere was a well-known and respected member of the community where he resided for 40 years.

He served as president of the South Plainfield High School PTA, was a founding member of South Plainfield High School's Project Graduation and served on the South Plainfield Board of Education for nine years.

Council Appoints
Department Heads

Two new department heads—tax collector and zoning officer—were appointed by the Borough Council on January 20.

Kim Clifford began working as a tax clerk in 2003. She replaces Richard Lorentzen.

Mary Beth Khidre has been transcribing the minutes of both boards for over six years.

Grant Fifth Graders
Accept the DARE

South Plainfield Police Officers Allen LaMonda and Dave Franchak held the annual Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) graduation for Grant Elementary School fifth grade students on January 27.

At this year's ceremony Officer LaMonda



announced his retirement after teaching the DARE program for 17 years. Officer Sherilyn Courtney will replace LaMonda.

Near the conclusion of the school year students are asked to write an essay explaining what they had learned and to also submit a poster. Two winners from each class are chosen randomly and they received a stuffed "Daren the Lion" and movie tickets to Regal Cinema.

Borough Begins Effort
To Establish Quiet Zones

At the February 2 Borough Council meeting CME Engineering was authorized to prepare plans and begin the approval process for construction of supplemental safety measures (SSM) to establish "quiet zones" at three Conrail railroad crossings—New Brunswick Avenue, Clinton Avenue and Front Street. The vote was 5-1. Tim McConville voted no, saying it was not the time to spend money on this project.

A "quiet zone" refers to a railroad grade crossing where trains are prohibited from sounding their horns in order to decrease noise levels for nearby residential communities.

More than 100 Hit the Trails
At Mountain Creek

The South Plainfield Ski Club traveled to Mountain Creek for the third of four seasonal trips. Over 100 club members, grades six through nine, were treated to ideal snow conditions, relatively warm weather, and minimal crowds on the lift line.

This year the high school has instituted a pilot program which includes high school students in the Ski Club.



Sister Nadine Boyle, principal, Sacred Heart School, accepts a proclamation from Mayor Charles Butrico on behalf of the Borough Council naming January 25 through 31 as "Catholic Schools Week."

Two SPHS Seniors Sign
Letters of Intent

February 4 marked an important day in South Plainfield High School's sport history. Two seniors, Greg Burton and Janari Miller, received football scholarships from their prospective colleges after signing letters of intent.

Greg Burton received a full tuition scholarship to Wagner College in Staten Island. His SPHS football career includes two years as a starter, leading the team in tackles, and captain of the football team. He was also named to the All GMC White Division.

Janari Miller received a full scholarship to Hofstra University in New York. His school football career includes three years as a starter, leading the team in sacks and captain of the football team. He was selected to the Super 100-Top 100 Players.

Woodland Avenue Trees
Continue to be a Hazard

Due to high winds on February 11 a giant tree limb fell onto Woodland Avenue causing the road to be closed to traffic. This is a continuation of the dead tree problem along Woodland Avenue which borders Edison and South Plainfield.

A downed tree on the Edison side of Woodland Avenue cut the power to 50 homes in December 2008. Edison and South Plainfield workers removed the tree and PSE&G restored power.



Last week bulldozers began preparing the area behind the PAL for the installation of the turf field which is scheduled to be completed in April.

Sacred Heart Holds
DARE Graduation

Sacred Heart School held their annual Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) graduation on February 11. South Plainfield Police DARE Officers Allen LaMonda and Dave Franchak spent 15 weeks with fifth grade students.

The winner of the poster contest was Mary Bach and the essay winner was Joshua DeCastro, who both received a Daren the Lion stuffed animal and movie theater passes.

Tiger Wrestlers Win
District Title, Set State Record

South Plainfield High School Wrestling Team won its 25th consecutive District 12 title, setting a new state record. The streak, dating back to 1985, is the state's current longest winning streak and breaks the previous record of 24. The Tigers piled up 237 team points and advanced 12 wrestlers to the Region 3 tournament at Union High School. Coach Kevin McCann was named Head Coach of the Year, while Coach Bill Hamilton was named Assistant Coach of the Year. Striking gold for the Tigers were Tyler Hunt, Richie Szcliga and Nick Vallone. Ryan Sacco and Jonathan Conroy won their second district titles, while Nick Heilmann scored his third title.

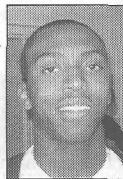
SPHS Senior Appointed
to West Point

At a special ceremony held at South Plainfield High School on February 19, Congressman Leonard Lance (R-7th District) presented a special Congressional Recognition Plaque and an American Flag to Nathaniel Eliassen in recognition of his appointment to West Point Military Academy.

The appointment was the culmination of Nate's goal from the first time he visited West Point during his freshman year.

Mike Burton Surpasses
Personal Goal of 1,000 Points

For four years basketball player Mike Burton, a South Plainfield High School senior, sought the goal of 1,000 baskets for his four years at SPHS. Burton reached that goal at the last game of the season against Bishop Ahr. Although Bishop Ahr won by three points (53-50), Burton attained a record of 1,011. He needed three points, but surpassed that with 14 points.

County to Buy Land
In Dismal Swamp

The Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders entered into an agreement to purchase 9.74 acres of environmentally sensitive land in South Plainfield for preservation, known as Adams Farm, from A. Ferraro Construction LLC, which was under contract to purchase the land from its original owner and had obtained preliminary approvals for 16 residential lots. The agreed upon price is \$2,450,000, based on three appraisals.

Under the agreement, the land's original owner, Charles Adams, will be able to retain occupancy of his home on the property and about 12,500 square feet of land for the rest of his life through a lease arrangement.



Robert Matticola at Ground Zero after the September 11 terrorist attack.

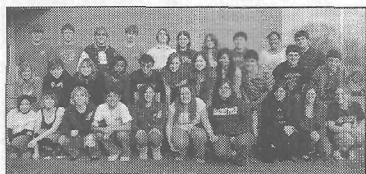
Resident to be Honored for
Hudson River Rescue Role

Assemblyman Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr. and the Borough Council honored Robert Matticola on March 2 at a ceremony during the regular public meeting.

Matticola, 40-year resident of South Plainfield, and director of Homeland Security for New York Waterway, was a first responder to the crash landing of U.S. Airways Flight 1549.

Activities Commemorate
Birthday of Dr. Seuss

Elementary schools throughout South Plainfield celebrated the birthday of acclaimed children's author Theodore Geisel, or Dr. Seuss as he is better known. The National Education Association annually sponsors Read Across America, now in its 12th year, which focuses on motivating children to read, in addition to helping them master basic skills. The reading celebration takes place for a week each year on or near March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. South Plainfield High School seniors toured the schools, some dressed as popular Dr. Seuss characters, reading books to children and making arts and crafts projects.

South Plainfield High School
Presents *Beauty and the Beast*

On March 19, the South Plainfield High School Players Drama Club presented the Disney classic, *Beauty and the Beast*, to the high school stage.

The show was directed and produced by SPHS English teacher, Gloria Naso, assisted by Stage Director John Angeline, also an English teacher.

Borough Welcomes Terno
D'Isola Sister City Visitors

South Plainfield rolled out the welcome mat for 15 visitors from its sister city, Terno D'Isola, Italy on March 7. The Italian officials were in the U.S. for a week-long cultural exchange, and South Plainfield was their first stop.

Ceremonies began at Borough Hall with Mayor Charles Butrico, Terno D'Isola Vice Mayor Carla Ferrati and Councilman Giacomo Pietro Pedrini signing a 10-year sister city agreement.

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The Italian visitors and dignitaries held ceremonies at Mounment Park and the Firefighters Memorial. After lunch at the senior center the visitors enjoyed a demonstration at fire headquarters, attended Mass at Sacred Heart Church and ended the day with an evening barbecue at the senior center.

Kathleen DiMeglio Dies



Kathleen DiMeglio died on March 16 at Haven Hospice in Edison. She was an active volunteer in South Plainfield, serving to better the community for many years. She was a member of the Traffic Safety Advisory Commission and often in attendance at meetings of the Board of Education and Borough Council. She served as Franklin School PTO president and was a member of South Plainfield Parents Ponytail Association.

GOP Chooses Anesh and Bengivenga

Former Councilmen Matt Anesh and Rob Bengivenga are the choice of South Plainfield Republicans for borough council. The borough's Republican Organization chose the pair after an open screening process.

Ciccio's Celebrates 25 Years

Ciccio's Pizza has been serving the South Plainfield community for 25 years. Partners Sev Baratta and Phil Palma opened their pizzeria/restaurant located at 134 Maple Ave. in March of 1984.

A few years later, they recruited Sev's brother, Carmine, who had previously worked as a chef in many of the finest, top-quality restaurants in Northern Italy. There he learned the art of cooking some of Italy's most delicious foods.



Sacred Heart School Girls Varsity Basketball Team won first place in the Diocese of Metuchen CYM Basketball 2009 Bishop Vincent de Paul Breen Tournament, Seventh and Eighth Grade Girls Division Championship on March 14. The junior varsity girls, grade five and six, won second place in their division.

Residents Prefer Ad Hoc Committee Truck Route

On February 23 Robert Spiegel, president of Edison Wetlands Association, attended the ad hoc truck route meeting and presented the committee with a map proposing two alternate Hollywood Avenue extension routes.

The map, along with a brief web poll, was posted on the *Observer* Web site and asked residents, "Which of the three alternate truck routes do you, as a South Plainfield resident, wish to see pursued?" Of the 41 people who participated, 76% chose the ad hoc truck route, which leaves the ballfields intact (31 votes); 20% chose the EWA Alternate 1 route, which passes close to established neighborhoods and adjacent to baseball fields (eight votes) and 5% chose the EWA Alternate 2 route, which crosses over and around the soccer/football fields (two votes).

Municipal Complex Gets Boost in Security

Through a \$187,060 Federal Technology Program grant received from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the South Plainfield Police Department installed security cameras in Borough Hall and outside in the parking lot surrounding the municipal complex.

According to Police Chief John Ferraro, the entire area is now being monitored 24 hours a day by 911 dispatchers on closed circuit TV.

Junior Baseball Club Celebrates 56th Season

Team members from the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club marched down Belmont Avenue to the Kenneth Avenue fields to officially kick off the 56th year of playing "America's National Pastime."

The South Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad accompanied the South Plainfield High School Marching Band under the direction of Roger Vroom III, as well as dignitaries and players, to the ballfields to begin the annual ceremony.



Ponytail Softball Holds Opening Day

After two consecutive weekends of rainouts, South Plainfield Recreation Department Ponytail Softball held their opening day ceremony. Under sunny skies Recreation Commission member Calvin Gross gave the invocation and veteran player Lainie Harris sang *The National Anthem*.

BOE Trims \$990K From 2009/2010 Budget

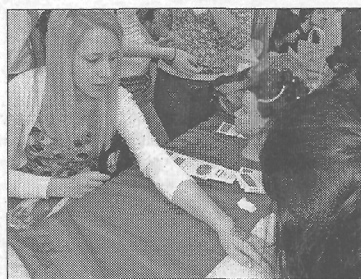
Before adopting the final 2009/2010 budget, the Board of Education cut \$990,273 from the budget introduced last month, resulting in the tax rate staying the same (\$2.823 per \$100 of assessed valuation). The final budget adopted adjusts to \$58,333,040, with \$40,281,200 to be raised in taxes based on combined \$39,255,220 general fund and \$1,025,980 debt service, instead of the tentative \$59,173,313 budget with \$41,271,473 to be raised by taxes.

Superintendent of Schools Jose Negron's plan for a full day kindergarten in the four elementary schools is still in place, as is a capital project to construct bathrooms for kindergarten classrooms.

The largest cut was the elimination of the proposed position of a language arts supervisor, a full time residency officer and a full time kindergarten teacher.

Ad Hoc Committee Names Alternate Truck Route

The Ad Hoc Alternate Truck Route Committee met on March 31 to finalize recommendations for a new truck route. The committee chose the route where Hollywood Avenue ends at the edge of the Dismal Swamp goes through the police rifle range, crosses over the Bound Brook and Metuchen Avenue and connects with Harmich Road. The truck route would not interfere with ballfields nor residential homes.



Students Explore Job Opportunities at Career Fair

The South Plainfield Business Association teamed up with South Plainfield High School to sponsor the first ever Career Day Fair on March 31.

The fair was an opportunity for students to increase their knowledge base regarding post-high school opportunities and help them make an informed decision with regard to their academic choices.

Approximately 60 participants, representing 40 professionals from all walks of life, spent the day in the high school gym handing out literature, answering questions and talking to students about their career opportunities.

Democrats Endorse Petronko and Scudato For Council

The South Plainfield Democratic Committee unanimously endorsed Council President Raymond Petronko and Councilman Joseph Scudato for reelection.

Sacred Heart Principal Honored by Diocese of Metuchen

The Diocese of Metuchen's Distinguished Educator Award was presented to Mercy Sister Nadine Boyle, principal of Sacred Heart School in South Plainfield. Sacred Heart and St. Matthias schools are this year's "Spotlight on Catholic Education Schools."

The Distinguished Educator awardees will each receive a \$2,500 check and a statue of St. John Neumann.

Sister Nadine, the third of five children of John and Martha Boyle, was educated by the Sisters of Mercy in Phillipsburg. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy on September 8, 1957.

Voters Approve Flat BOE Budget

Residents voted Tuesday in favor of the school board's 2009/10 budget of \$58,333,040. Of 14,449 registered voters, 10.8% cast ballots in the budget decision, and 21% voted for board candidates.

The school budget passed, 870-686, including 28 absentee ballots.

The three open seats on the board were uncontested. Incumbent Board President Jim Giannakis garnered 1,029 votes; newcomer Bill Seesselberg received 1,006; and former board member Carol Byrne received 978.

Council Paves Way for Progressive Claims Center

The McKinley Street site, currently utilized as a storage area for trucks, various equipment and machinery, is on its way to becoming the new regional headquarters of Progressive Insurance. After a unanimous vote by the Borough Council in favor of a resolution approving the four lots on McKinley Street as "in need of redevelopment," the council instructed the Planning Board to prepare a redevelopment plan for the area.

Stimulus Money Welcomed for Site Remediation

Assemblymen Patrick J. Diegnan Jr. and Peter Barnes III welcomed news that the former Cornell Dubilier Electronics site will receive more than \$25 million in Environmental Protection Agency cleanup funding under the recently enacted federal stimulus package.

The site is currently known as the Hamilton Industrial Park, and was more recently occupied by numerous commercial businesses.

PAL Memorial Turf Field Ready for Play

The Police Athletic League Memorial Field, located behind the PAL building, was officially dedicated on May 2. The turf field was funded by a \$1.5M grant from the Middlesex County Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

The field is enclosed by an eight foot fence and includes a new, modern playground and bleachers that can hold up to 230 people. No lights have been installed on the field or in the parking lot.

Pitt Street Resident Arrested On Assault Weapons Charge

Resident Steven Toth, 37, of 314 Pitt Street was arrested and charged with making terroristic threats, possession of weapons and possession of weapons for unlawful purpose after he confronted a worker in a drunken state at a nearby commercial building.

According to police, Toth walked into Pride Retail Contractors, Inc. at 305 Pulaski St. with an AR-15 assault rifle and had a "brief rambling incoherent" conversation with a possible co-owner, who police believe knew him.

A search of the property, aided by the Middlesex County Sheriff's Department Canine Unit, revealed 26 firearms, including a machine gun, rifles, handguns, shotguns, numerous firearm parts, gunpowder, volatile chemicals and several thousand rounds of ammunition. A replica handgun was also found in the woods near the home which was reportedly discarded as Toth made his way back to the residence. The FBI and ATF also assisted in the investigation.



South Plainfield Police Officers competed in the 16th annual Polar Bear Plunge to support New Jersey Special Olympics in February. (L-R) Police Officers Lloyd McNelly, Joe Papa, Pete Papa, Brian Iarrapino and Sgt. Wendell Born after the icy plunge.

Bomb Threat Suspect Arrested

An Edison man was apprehended by South Plainfield Police while he was phoning in a 9-1-1 bomb threat for Kennedy Elementary School on Norwood Avenue on May 4.

According to police, Eric Preston, 30, of Oak Tree Road was on a pay phone in front of K-Food on Park Avenue at around 9 p.m. when Officer Garrett Cassio spotted the suspect. He attempted to flee the scene on foot and was caught and arrested.

Preston was charged with making terroristic threats and false public alarms.

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The Year in Review

Wine Tasting Benefits
Education Foundation

The South Plainfield Education Foundation held their second annual Fine Wine, Spirits and Craft Beer Tasting Fundraiser on May 1. More than 100 attended the event at the Italian American Club. The event raised about \$1,700.

Volunteers Clean Up
Heaps of Borough Trash

After weeks of cool, wet weather, April 25 dawned warm and bright. South Plainfield's volunteer community came out in force to wage war against trash. Twenty-four groups registered for Clean-up Week, and a record number of walk-ins brought the turnout to well over 200 people.

By the end of the week, cleanups had been completed at 42 locations including parks, roadsides, streams and vacant lots. Volunteers cleaned 6.5 miles of road and 59 acres of public land. In all there were at least 192 orange bags of litter weighing over three tons, plus about another .75 tons of unbagged junk and .25 tons of bottles and cans clean enough to be recycled.

Local Officials Tackle
Unexpected Challenges

On May 6 Jackie Jackson, along with National Multiple Sclerosis Society Manager of Advocacy, Stephanie Hunsinger; Mayor Charles Butrico, Police Chief John Ferraro, Councilwoman Chrissy Buteas, Officer Dave Franchak and *Observer* staff writer Patricia Abbott conducted the first South Plainfield accessibility tour at the suggestion of Jackson.

Jackson, a two-year resident of South Plainfield, faces more than her multiple disabilities because she uses a wheelchair.



With the help of many volunteers, the grave foot markers of local veterans that have been buried for years were visible this Memorial Day. Dennis Scalara spearheading the drive to uncover the markers and install medallions.

President Lincoln Pays a Visit

South Plainfield Historical Society sponsored a Civil War encampment at Spring Lake Park on May 16. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, George Custer Camp #17, re-enactment displayed a camp set up, including soldiers in uniforms and arms. The event offered the public a glimpse of what life was like for the soldiers. President Lincoln (Bob Costello) reviewed the troops. Mr. Lincoln talked with the public visitors and answered questions about the lifestyle of the Civil War period.

Four Take a Spot in
the SPHS Hall of Fame

On June 2 South Plainfield High School added four alumni to the list of prestigious Hall of Fame members. This year's inductees, Steven Agrista, Glenn Cullen, Dawn Giakas and Robert Matticola, were honored at a luncheon held at Flanagan's Restaurant in the company of family and friends.

Council Vote Executes
Revised Labor Agreement

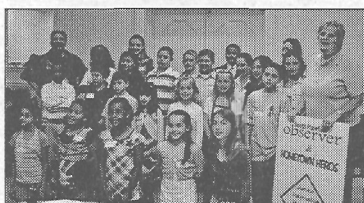
The council passed an ordinance to execute a labor agreement with the borough's department heads giving them pay raises of 2.25, 2.50 and 2.75 percent over the next three years.

Late last year the Republican-controlled council passed an ordinance covering department head raises totaling 12 percent. The mayor vetoed the ordinance saying the raises were too high and asked the council to hold off and renegotiate, but the Republicans voted to override the veto.

Junior Journalists Honored
At Annual Banquet

The accomplishments of 26 Junior Journalists were celebrated at a banquet in their honor on May 13 at the American Legion. The dinner, sponsored by Debbie and Charlie Kurland of Hometown Heros and the *South Plainfield Observer*, was the culmination of an eight-month program to promote the art of writing.

Jordyn Jackson was awarded The Ruth Kurland Memorial Award and a \$1,000 Savings Bond, sponsored by Debbie and Charlie Kurland in memory of Charlie's mother.

Schools Closed Due to
High Absentee Rate

Classes were shut down at Grant Elementary School and the middle school due to what was called a "high student absentee rate" reported at both buildings. According to Superintendent Jose Negron, after contacting parents of nearly 100 students at each school to document the reason for the absences, many responded that their children were experiencing similar symptoms: high fever and sore throat.

Sodexo was asked to have the night crew of custodians assist the daytime crew in cleaning desks, chairs, sinks, computers, doorknobs and any surfaces touched on a regular basis. All the schools recently added wall mounted hand sanitizers in the cafeterias.

Future Stars Preschool
Celebrates 29th Graduation

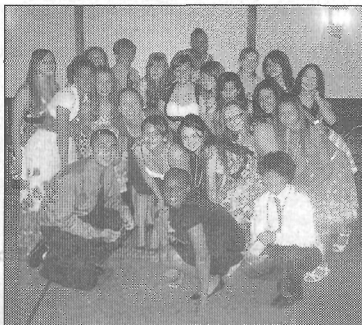
The South Plainfield Adult School sponsored Future Stars Preschool graduated their 29th

class on June 8. Adult School Director Sophia Domogala welcomed the audience, including Superintendent Jose Negron, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Fred Oberkehr and Board of Education members Debbie Boyle, Bob Jones and Sharon Miller.

Each graduate received a diploma and a handshake from the board members.



On May 26 the South Plainfield High School Varsity Baseball Team played Colonia at Patriots Stadium after two rain reschedules. The team began play at 5:30 p.m. Colonia won the game with a final score of 4-2. Administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students filled the seats and cheered on the Tigers.



The 2009 Sacred Heart School graduation class attends a graduation dance held at the Knights of Columbus Council #6203 hall.

Army Vet Awarded
Purple Heart 62 Years Late

After 62 years of waiting, U.S. Army Veteran John Kozak received the Purple Heart and the other medals he earned, including a Bronze Star, at a ceremony on June 29. The medals were presented at Monument Park by U.S. Congressman Leonard Lance. Kozak was joined by his daughter and grandson.

Kozak's story began in 1945 when he was shot while serving as a corporal in Germany. Eager to get home to his family, Kozak returned to the United States at the end of his enlistment, and at the time he was told that his medals would be mailed to him. The medals never arrived.

Murray Gets Help
From His Friends

"With a Little Help From My Friends" was a fundraiser held for the benefit of South Plainfield High School Choral Teacher Tracy Glenn Murray, who is recovering from a serious illness. He is a 19-year veteran of the high school. On June 13 nearly 200 people attended the benefit held in the high school's auditorium.

Diehl Appointed Interim
Principal at Roosevelt

Robert Diehl, assistant principal at South Plainfield High School, was appointed interim principal of Roosevelt School starting July 1 at the Board of Education meeting held June 17.

Initially a history teacher at Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains for two years, Diehl left teaching for 19 years to become a salesman for the Josten's American Yearbook Company. He returned to SPHS in 1999 teaching social studies. He was appointed to the position of high school disciplinarian in 2006.

Council Okays \$1M for
New Market Extension

The Borough Council approved funding for the New Market Avenue Extension project at the June 29 meeting. The vote was 4-2, along party lines. The cost of this phase of the project is \$1.5M with \$1M in bonds to be issued to finance the improvements.

The extension will improve the flow of truck traffic at the intersection of New Market Avenue and Hamilton Boulevard by extending New Market straight across the boulevard, meeting up with Spicer Avenue at Garibaldi Avenue.

Two Injured in Five Car
Crash at Auto Spa

An accident involving two auto spa employees and five vehicles occurred at the Xtreme Clean Auto Spa at 1425 New Market Ave. on the morning of July 3.

A 1991 Toyota Camry was traveling westbound on New Market Avenue when the vehicle jumped the curb on the south side of New Market Avenue, striking a mailbox at 1421 New Market Avenue. The car continued westbound, striking a 2001 Dodge Neon, which was parked in the Xtreme Clean Auto Spa parking lot. It then stuck three unoccupied vehicles, all waiting to be dried after exiting the car wash. Two employees of Xtreme Clean Auto Spa were injured when they were struck by one of the cars.



On June 3 and 4, the Grant School Drama Club performed *Cinderella, Jr.*, a simplified version of *Cinderella* specifically designed for the younger performers. The Prince was Brett Temple and Cinderella was Kyrsten Grabsinsky.

Highland Environmental
Reserve Vandalized

The Highland Avenue Woods Environmental Education Reserve on Sylvania Place was vandalized by all terrain vehicle (ATV) riders and vagrants.

Slats of the wooden railing on the deck of the nature center classroom were knocked off and a window screen was removed and thrown on the road. The footbridge leading to other parts of the reserve was also destroyed.

Summer Drama Workshop's
38th Production Opens

The much anticipated 2009 Summer Drama Workshop production of *Fame-The Musical* opened July 30. Spanning four years at the School of the Performing Arts, a diversified group of talented teenagers experience a multitude of feelings, growth, change and maturity through song, dance and music.

Renovations Underway
At Borough Schools

South Plainfield High School was closed when classes ended in June to install rooftop air conditioners. As part of a safety and maintenance program new curbing, paving, striping and signage is being installed in the high school parking lot. As a shared service with the police department,

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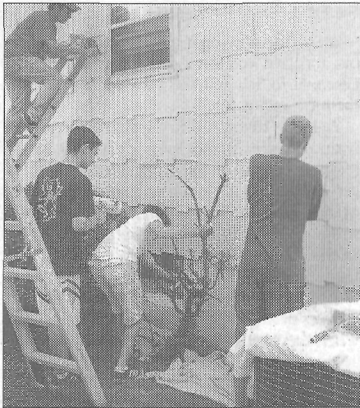
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68 security cameras within the high school will be installed along with 35 cameras in the middle school and six cameras positioned within the parking lot adjoining both schools.

To be ready for the new full day kindergarten program additional bathrooms were also being installed in all four elementary schools. These are non-referendum projects.



Squires Answer Call Of Those in Need

The South Plainfield Columbian Squires stepped up and responded to a call for help by a 90 year-old resident, who was in desperate need of house painting. The Squires enthusiastically responded to her call for help. The boys began by power washing and scraping prior to painting the siding, trim and shutters. They also trimmed back the bushes while they were there. Squires members parents provided snacks and lunch. The work was completed in two days.

Interns Explore Municipal Government

The Shared Service Committees for the Borough and the Board of Education collaborated this year on initiating a student intern program which has resulted in four South Plainfield High School students interning at borough hall.

The four students, Bjorn G. Delacruz, Amelia Lyte, Chante Martin and Ricardo Robles, were employed on a volunteer basis.

The interns assisted seniors at the senior center, updated property cards in the tax assessor's office and transferred over year-end files in the finance office. At both the Recreation Department and Department of Public Works, the interns answered phones and helped residents. Most often, however, the interns assisted with the sewer and tax bills in the tax collector's office.

Cyclist Injured After Colliding with Truck

A 14 year-old male bicyclist from South Plainfield was injured when he struck a garbage truck on Hamilton Boulevard.

The boy, who was riding northbound on the sidewalk, crashed into the right rear tires, with the bicycle being run over by the truck. The truck was turning onto the dead end portion of Hamilton Boulevard near the Lakeview Avenue overpass en route to collect trash at the South Plainfield Knights of Columbus Hall.

The boy, who was not wearing a helmet, was transported to John F. Kennedy Medical Center, treated for minor injuries and released.

Tiger Sharks Take Second in NJSJC "A" Championships

On August 1, the South Plainfield Tiger Sharks hosted the New Jersey Swimming and Diving Conference "A" League Championships at the community pool on Maple Avenue across from the PAL building. Competing in the championship were the following teams: Hillsborough YMCA, who placed first with 478 points, East Brunswick Sandpipers, Cranford Gators, Middlesex Water Wrats, Roycefield Rapids, Metuchen Municipal Pool, Chatham Colony, and South Plainfield Tiger Sharks who came in second with a score of 287 points. The Sandpipers placed third with a score of 207.5 points. Each team's members swam a variety of events.

Police Seek Labor Day Throat Slasher

A Department of Public Works (DPW) employee had his throat slashed just as the Labor Day fireworks ended at Spring Lake Park.

David Donatelli, 53, of Somerset was manning a light tower in the parking lot near the restrooms at the park's Maple Avenue entrance when police received a call at 9:10 p.m. regarding a stabbing. The DPW worker was rushed to JFK Medical Center in Edison where he underwent emergency surgery.

Witnesses described the assailant as a black male, 5'2" to 5'6" tall with a thin build wearing a black baseball hat, dark pants with a red stripe and a dark colored shirt.

Donatelli has been released from the hospital and is recovering at home.

Post Office Delays Observer Delivery

While some residents received the *South Plainfield Observer* Labor Day issue (September 4) on time, others received it later in the day and the remainder received it the next day.

After a subscriber called to say he had not received his paper, *Observer* publisher Nancy Grennier called the post office to investigate the matter as the paper was supposed to be mailed to every address in the borough. Postmaster Larry Thomas informed Grennier that he had made the decision to delay delivery of the paper due to heavy volume.

After a long discussion with the postmaster, Thomas reversed the decision and called the carriers back to the post office to pick up the newspaper to complete their routes and then distribute the *Observer* to as many addresses as possible. The remainder of the town waited for delivery until the next day. Postmaster Thomas has since apologized for any inconvenience the delay may have caused.

Reduced Costs, Improved Health Goal of Energy Audit

Clough Harbor & Associates (CHA) were in South Plainfield to conduct an energy audit of all of borough- owned facilities, including the PAL, the public works garage, the library and the municipal building. The borough is looking for ways to lower energy costs and help the environment. Seventy-five percent of the cost of the audit will be covered under the New Jersey's Clean Energy Program. This is the first phase of the audit.

When the audit is complete, CHA will issue a list of recommended cost-effective, energy efficiency measures and upgrades which could reduce operating expenses and in many cases, improve health and productivity.

Council Approves Fall Bulk Pickup

The Borough Council approved a resolution to schedule a town-wide bulk pick up in October. At the last meeting, Mayor Charles Buttrico commented that he wasn't sure if there would be

a pick up due to budget constraints. However, after receiving a number of complaints from residents, CFO Glenn Cullen was consulted to see if there was a way to fund a fall pickup and it has been put back on the schedule.

Oak Tree Farms Closes Its Doors

Oak Tree Farms, once known as Green Farms, on South Plainfield Avenue, closed for good on September 22. For many decades the store was considered "the place to go" for personalized service when you wanted a special cut of meat or to pick up milk or eggs.

Owner Maha Ibrahim worked in the store for 15 years prior to taking ownership with her brother, George, five years ago. Both are Syrian immigrants, and Maha still vividly remembers her arrival in the United States on August 15, 1995. She began working at Oak Tree Farms on January 7, 1996 and has not stopped working since.

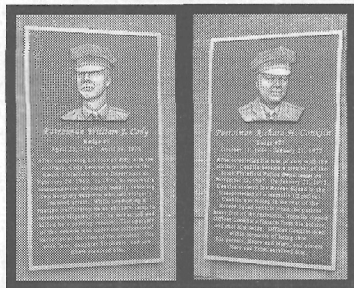
Stimulus Funding Accelerates CDE Cleanup

The Cornell-Dubilier site was added to the Superfund National Priorities List in 1998.

Clean up began in earnest in 2007 with the demolition of the 18 buildings on the property. The entire area was then paved over and four air monitoring systems were placed on the property and 31 ground water monitoring wells were also installed on- and off-site.

Now the cleanup is moving into a new phase: treatment of the contaminated soil beneath the asphalt with the installation of a Low Temperature Thermal Desorption unit by Maxymillian Technologies.

PAL Field Dedication Honors Officers Cady and Conklin



South Plainfield Police Officers Richard Conklin and William Cady, who were killed in the line of duty, will forever be publicly remembered for their service to the community after a formal dedication ceremony was held at the Police Athletic League Memorial Field on September 26.

Two plaques installed at the entrance of the PAL Memorial Field were officially unveiled in honor of Officers Conklin and Cady.

"From now on, as each person enters the field, they will be able to stop and remember what they did for South Plainfield," said Recreation Director Kevin Hughes.

Borough Introduces Transition Year Budget

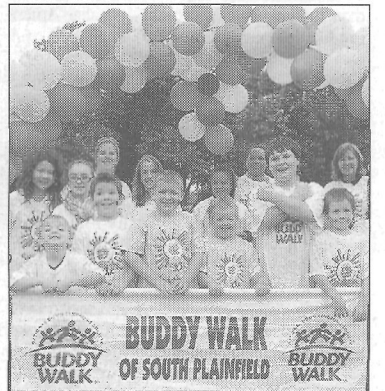
The mayor and council approved the introduction of the borough's 2009 transition budget. The vote was five in favor; Ray Rusnak abstained.

In September, the borough received approval to move from a fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) to a calendar year (January 1 to December 31) budget. The transition budget covers July 1 to December 31, or one half year.

Buddy Walk Raises \$31K for Research

According to Buddy Walk organizer and South Plainfield resident Michele Both, the 2009 Downs Syndrome Buddy Walk was "our biggest year so far. We have raised over \$31,000." The event involved nearly 500 people; 133 turned out to register the day of the walk.

Many local businesses donated a wide variety of items to the walk. There was face painting, foam crafts for kids, Henna tattoos and games.



The October 3 South Plainfield Buddy Walk participants didn't let a little rain dampen their spirits.

Borough Updates Emergency Radio And 9-1-1 Systems

In May South Plainfield Police Sgt. Jim Foran approached Councilman Joe Scudato about the need to upgrade the Emergency 9-1-1 and radio system which borough dispatchers use when residents make emergency calls. The old system was out of date, antiquated and, on occasion, calls were being dropped.

The cost to completely upgrade the system was estimated to be \$273,000. Through the efforts of Chief John Ferraro, \$127,000 was made available from the South Plainfield Police Department Forfeiture Fund and \$146,285 was obtained from a Federal Department of Justice Grant, which Captain Paul Brembt and Foran helped to write.

Voters Reject BOE Referendum

South Plainfield voters gave a resounding "no" to the Board of Education's proposed \$21M bond referendum on September 29. The final tally was 1,326-no and 562-yes.

If passed, the bond would have approved capital improvements to the elementary and middle schools, which included the installation of air conditioning and windows. The total cost of the improvements would have been \$21M; \$8M of the cost to be funded by the state.

A total of 1,888 votes were cast, or 13.4 percent of 14,050 registered voters. The cost to hold the special election was approximately \$30,000.

Motorcycle Riders Take to the Roads to Help Kids With Cancer

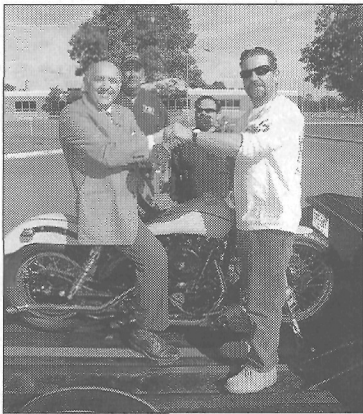
The Old Timers Motorcycle Club annual motorcycle run raised nearly \$34,000 to benefit the Open Your Heart to Children Battling Cancer Foundation, Inc.

Founded by agents at Century 21/Moretti Realty, the money raised through Open Your Heart benefits children battling cancer and their families. It also supports cancer research and other local resources in the area.

Escorted by Lt. Kevin Murtagh of the South Plainfield Police Department, more than 400 motorcyclists from the tri-state area took part in the 60-mile run through Somerset and Hunterdon counties. They returned to the Pop Warner field on Kenneth Avenue to enjoy an afternoon of food and entertainment. More than 750 people attended the run and after-ride picnic.

LOOKING BACK

20
THE YEAR IN REVIEW
09



Old Timers Motorcycle Club founder and South Plainfield High School teacher Rich D'Urso hands the keys to the winner of the Harley Davidson motorcycle raffle, South Plainfield High School Principal Dr. Ken May. Also pictured are club members Mel Tomei and Tom Kaiser.

Oberkehr Named Rochelle Park Superintendent of Schools

The Board of Education accepted the resignation of Dr. Fredrik M. Oberkehr as assistant superintendent of instruction and operations at its October 14 BOE meeting. Oberkehr, who has served the district since 1995, has been named superintendent of schools for Rochelle Park in Bergen County.



School Proficiency Assessments Released

The results of the State Department of Education 2008/2009 High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) and the Middle School NJASK tests indicate that borough students failed to meet the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) benchmarks. The district is still awaiting state notification on AYP and School Improvement status as a result of the NJASK tests taken by third and fourth grade students in the four elementary schools and for the NJASK tests taken by Grant School fifth and sixth grade students.

Class of '59 Graduates Attend Half Century Reunion

Not many high school classes have the opportunity to hold 50-year reunions; this is not true for the South Plainfield High School class of 1959, the third class to graduate from the 'new' South Plainfield High School. The festivities kicked off at the PAL on Friday evening, the day before the reunion. Some gathered at the PAL for a first meeting with classmates. The October 10th reunion was held at the Crown Plaza in Edison and began with a cocktail hour in the Garden Room.

Devine to Receive 2009 Cappy Award

Arthur (Art) Devine has been chosen to receive this year's Cappy Award. He will be honored posthumously at a dinner on November 14 at the senior center. Art lived most of his life in South Plainfield, from 1951 until his death in 2001, and was very involved in youth activities and other organizations.

The Year in Review

NJ DOT Awards \$365,000 for New Market Upgrade

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJ DOT) has awarded \$365,000 to South Plainfield which will be designated towards the reconstruction of New Market Avenue. The first phase of the project includes the roadway between Elsie Avenue to South Clinton Avenue, approximately one-half mile in length. The New Market Avenue reconstruction will include curbs and sidewalks as well as the roadway from Elsie to Hamilton Blvd.

Transition Budget Passes With No Tax Increase

The temporary 2009 transition budget was approved at the November 9 Borough Council meeting. The temporary budget, which encompasses six months (July 1 through December 31, 2009), was necessary in order for South Plainfield to transition from a fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) to a calendar year (January 1 through December 31) budget. The final vote was 4-1, with no support from the Republicans. Ray Rusnak voted no and Tim McConville was not present. According to CFO Glenn Cullen, the temporary budget did not result in a tax increase.

Borough to Participate in Medicine Disposal Day

South Plainfield will be hosting an Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey local collection site as part of the first statewide medicine disposal day in the nation. The event will take place at the police department between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on November 14. This initiative, open to all residents, was organized to encourage local community residents to properly dispose of their unused, unwanted and expired medicine.

Republicans Gain Back Control of the Borough Council

Republican challengers Robert Bengivenga, Jr. and Matthew Anesh defeated Democratic incumbents Ray Petronko and Joe Scudato for two, three-year seats on the Borough Council. Republicans will be the majority party (4-2) in January, a reversal of last year's results when Democrats Chrissy Buteas and Franky Salerno's victory gave the Democrats a 4-2 majority. A total of 6,470 votes were cast out of 14,053 registered voters (46%), down from last year's turnout of 70 percent. Anesh was the top vote getter with 3,230 votes, followed by Bengivenga with 3,196. Democrat incumbents Petronko and Scudato received 3,070 and 2,966 votes, respectively.



Matt Anesh and Rob Bengivenga

Council Halts COAH Agreement

The resolution to finalize the COAH Developers Agreement, which was tabled during last month's council meeting, has been set aside and no further action is expected to be taken. South Plainfield has been working on the COAH agreement since the beginning of 2008 and the resolution was the final step in the borough receiving its Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) certification. The consensus was to hold off on taking action until Governor-elect Chris Christie takes office. He has been quoted as saying that he will "gut" the program and put it to an end.

SPBA, Police Chief Offer Lifesaving Skills to Students

Police Chief John Ferraro, aware of the value of CPR (cardiac pulmonary resuscitation) certification, thought it would be a skill that could be beneficial for high school seniors to learn prior to their graduation. Ferraro spoke to Superintendent of Schools Jose Negron about offering a CPR course. Negron endorsed the idea. Ferraro applied for a grant to pay for teaching automated external defibrillator (AED) as well as to train the teachers, but was unable to obtain the grant. Negron then agreed to have the district pick up the cost of training the teachers and the South Plainfield Business Association agreed to purchase the AED.

Veterans: Honoring the Service and Sacrifice

Veterans Day ceremonies were held throughout South Plainfield November 11. The middle school held services on November 10 with a flag raising ceremony. Franklin School also held its annual program on November 10, since public schools were closed on Veterans Day. VFW Post #6763 held ceremonies on November 11 at 11 a.m. at the VFW Hall on Front Street. Sacred Heart School held Veterans Day ceremonies that afternoon.

Venerated Basketball Coach Dies



Anthony J. Cotoia, one of New Jersey's most respected and successful high school basketball coaches, died after a brief illness. In 1955 Cotoia accepted a teaching position in South Plainfield, when he became the high school's first basketball coach. After two years of building the local basketball program from the ground up, including establishing youth leagues in town, he coached the 1959 team to an undefeated season. His overall record at SPHS was 177-63. Cotoia played a key role in developing state-of-the-art athletic facilities at the high school, including the Frank Jost Track and Field and SPHS gym, which was named in his honor after his retirement.

Cornell-Dubilier Cleanup Moves to 24 Hour Operation

On October 16 the burners were lit on the Low Temperature Thermal Desorption Unit and testing began to ensure everything was operating properly at the Cornell-Dubilier Electronics (CDE) superfund site. Testing took place over several weeks and ended with clean material being fed through the system for approximately two weeks. The unit began operating 24 hours a day on November 16. About five to seven days worth of soil (315 tons per day) can be stored in the tent-like structure behind the unit prior to being fed onto the first conveyor belt.

Three Schools Evacuated

Police responded to emergency calls in local schools on December 10 after Kennedy School received a bomb threat and Franklin School reported a burning odor, and on December 11 after the smell of natural gas was reported at the high school. All three schools were evacuated. On December 10 South Plainfield Police received word of a bomb in Kennedy School that forced students and staff to leave the building. While the Kennedy evacuation was underway, the odor from an overhead light ballast in a Franklin School classroom forced students outside for a brief period. The following day, December 11, high school students were sent to Grant School and the middle school after the smell of natural gas was reported.



South Plainfield resident Vincent Buttiglieri was sworn in as the 83rd president of the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey on November 18.

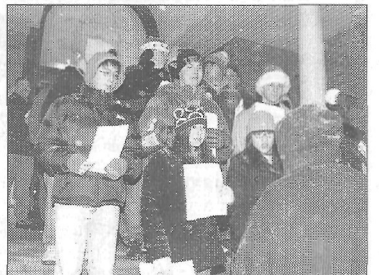
Four Department of Public Works Employees Retire

The family, friends and fellow employees of four retiring members of the Department of Public Works gathered to celebrate at a party at the Italian-American Club. Retiring are Superintendent Joe Glowacki (35) and employees Victor Kurilew (38), Paul Brand (27) and Donald Fiore (31). They were employed for a combined total of 126 years.

Police Make Arrest in Labor Day Slashing

South Plainfield Police made an arrest in the case of a Public Works Department employee who had his throat slashed during the Labor Day fireworks event at Spring Lake Park. Anthony K. Cole, 24, of 227 Woolworth Ave. in South Plainfield was charged with attempted murder, unlawful possession of a weapon and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose. Officers responded to a 911 call in the park on the evening of September 7 and discovered the 53-year-old borough employee with a laceration to the neck and throat. He was rushed to JFK Medical Center in Edison and underwent emergency surgery. Cole was arrested without incident and is being held at the Middlesex County Correction Center in lieu of \$1M bail.

Tree Lighting Honors Memory of 101st Airborne



Members of the community braved the blizzard-like conditions to join Rick McCriscin and the 101st Airborne Division of Screaming Eagles at the annual tree lighting ceremony commemorating the 248 servicemen and women who lost their lives in a plane crash in 1985.

BOE Approves \$185,000+ Principals' Raise Over 3 Years

The South Plainfield Board of Education approved a new three-year contract with the Professional Principals Unit at their regular public meeting last Wednesday. The contract, which runs from July 2009 through June 2012, includes a 3% raise for 2009/2010, 3.25% for 2011, and 3.75% in the third year. The cost of the contract to the taxpayers during each of the next three years will be \$1,789,854 (current school year), \$1,843,550 for 2010/2011 and \$1,903,465 for 2011/2012.



South Plainfield High School Orchestra

High School Winter Holiday Concert

South Plainfield High School's Winter Holiday Concert took place on December 17 with the Emeralds taking the stage and singing *This Little Babe* and *Hail, Holy Queen*. The orchestra then played *Fantasy on Sleepers, Wake, Brandenburg Con-*

certo No. 3: Moderato, Allegro, Paapam/Gesu Bambino and *Holiday for Strings*. The Jades sang *The Restroom Door Said*, "Gentlemen" and *White Christmas*. The Jazz Ensemble performed *Sesame Street* featuring Chelsea Ng

on flute, Alexa Douras on drums and Justin Lesky on trumpet, *In the Groove* with Alyssa Aiello on trumpet, G. Bjorn Delacruz on tenor saxophone and Jhemarr Anderson on alto saxophone, and *Gospel John* with Alyssa Aiello on trumpet and Pravin Thompson on guitar.

The concert band played *Christmas Declaration*, *Celtic Christmas*, *Fantasia for Christmas* and *Toboggan Ride*.

The chorus sang Roman Catholic chants from *Stabat Mater*, *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, featuring soprano Erin O'Connor, alto Kelly Kline, tenor Francis Suarez, Miguel Mejia on bass and Paul DiDario on piano and *Inflammatus Et Assensus* featuring soprano Kathleen Vincent and Paul DiDario on piano and *In Sempiterna Saecula, Amen* with Paul DiDario on piano.

The combined chorus and alumni ended the program singing *Hallelujah*.

Roger Vroom III is the director of bands, Bruce Mikolon is the director of the string orchestra and Tracy Murray is the director of choral activities.



The South Plainfield High School Jades

Riley Students Entertain at Winter Concert

John E. Riley School held their annual winter concert on December 7. The evening began with Director Sarah LiVecchi leading the orchestra in playing *Rolling Along*, *Good King Wenceslas* and *Kwanzaa*.

The band, conducted by Toby Baldwin, performed *Hot Cross Buns*, *Go Tell Aunt Rhodie* and *Jingle*

Bells. The chorus ended the program singing *Here We Come A-Caroling*, *Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child*, *Rules for Christmas*, *Happy Hanukkah!*, *O Arbol De Navidad*, *The World Says Merry Christmas* and *There Will Be Peace*. The chorus was under the direction of Joanne Gurske.



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The Ugly Club

'Ugly' is the New Beautiful in Local Music

With the recent popularity of iTunes and other digital music retailers, independent artists are at the forefront of the music industry. At the forefront of New Jersey's local music scene is a lovable bunch of indie-rockers from South Plainfield, The Ugly Club. But, there is nothing 'ugly' about them.

Formed from ex-members of New Jersey bands, The Command Radio, Socratic and Beale Street Love, The Ugly Club is an indie-rock soul band taking the tri-state area by storm with their catchy tunes and diverse musical

style. Think: The Beatles meets The White Stripes meets Ray Charles!

Within only six months of existence, the band has played various venues in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, including Union County Music Fest with headliners like Third Eye Blind and Kenny Wayne Shepard. The group also recently opened at the infamous Starland Ballroom for soul legend Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings.

The band is happy to announce the release of their debut EP, *Sing What You Want*, now available on their Web site, www.theuglyclubmusic.com, at concerts and at iTunes, Amazon Mp3, Rhapsody and other online distributors.

The Ugly Club had a CD release concert on December 19 at Crossroads in Garwood, which also benefited music education. All proceeds will be donated to Donors Choose, an organization that helps fund educational programs in need.

—Submitted by Steven Buckley

The following occurred at the BOE public meeting on December 16:

- The following students were recognized for academic achievement: letter of commendation from National Merit Scholarship Program to Alexandra Skula, Michael Sullivan, Maher Khan and Jonathan Sukenik; 2009 College Board AP awards to Michael Boyle, Richard Harzula, Timothy Oppelt, Maxwell Butler, Zane Lesky, Allyson Paterek, Nora Stasio, Allison Clawson, Christopher Lesniak and Rachel Smith; AP Scholar with Honors to Nathaniel Eliassen, Jeremiah Magpile, Caitlin Herriot, Kirsten Nuber, Victoria Tran, Chris Lonten and Heather Stolloff; AP Scholar with Distinction to Francesca Bayak, Lindsay Fredericks, Audrey Cupo, Joseph Mennuti, Kara Thomas, Rebecca Deffler and Michael Pachtyel.

- A certificate of tenure was presented to Stephanie Kaneda.

- Presentation of the 2008/2009 audit from Vincent Montanino from V.M. Associates.

- Approval of the following: high school winter athletic schedule for 2009-10; middle school winter sports schedules for 2009-10; curricula for 2009-10; additions to high school program planning guide, international relations, economics 101, Spanish II Honors, Spanish III Honors; additions to the middle school course offerings; second reading of policy #8760-pupil accident; first reading of policy #8310-public records; 2009-10 Professional Principals Unit Memorandum of Agreement and Salary Guide; 2009-10 Negotiated Unit Administrator salary; Resignation of Dana Hauck, Grant School Literary Magazine Advisor.

- The board made the following appointments: Heather Hearne-middle school special education long term substitute teacher; Eileen Stellakis-adult high school part-time supervisor; Linda Schwebel, SRA mathematics teacher; Jessica Kubek, mathematics

SCHOOL BOARD Notes

teacher; Victoria Boley-bowling parent/community volunteer; substitute teacher appointments/reappointments: Kathy Criley-substitute latchkey aide; Shirley Affinito, Debra Leporino, Jacqueline Prongay as substitute instructional support/duty aide/secretary and adjustment of hours and salary of bus aide Natalie Cooper. Approval of prescription premium reimbursement sidebar agreement and realted co-payments.

The following actions were taken: sick leave sidebar agreement approval; prescription premium reimbursement sidebar agreement approval; compensation for time in district for Principal Ellen Decker-Lorys; affirmative action officer appointment of Robert Diehl; resolution regarding the residency hearing of student E.B., J.H., N.H., A.K., G.E and approval of professional development workshop presentation for the world language teachers and

art teacher. Renewal of maintenance contract with Eplus Technology, Inc. covering computer equipment and software related to district network equipment, all cameras and servers, library network, classroom network, administrative network which includes telephones; approval for TechKnow Associates Corp. to present workshops to teachers to development project based learning.

Special BOE Meeting Cancelled

Please be advised that the public hearing to discuss and/or modify contract terms and conditions for non-affiliated employees, which was scheduled as a part of the Regular Public Meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. has been cancelled.

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Obituaries

Joan (Macellara) Daly, 53

Joan (Macellara) Daly passed away on Friday, Dec. 25 in her home surrounded by family after a long and brave battle with cancer.

Though born in Jersey City, Joan considered South Plainfield her hometown and lived here most of her life. She married the late Thomas Daly in 1983 and together they raised two sons. Joan was a devoted mother and an active participant in her boys' local sporting teams and organizations. Joan was an avid bowler and enjoyed playing in multiple local leagues.

For the past 32 years, Joan was employed by All-State Legal Supply Company of Cranford in the purchasing department, and also considered herself a professional Giants and Yankees fan.

She is predeceased by her husband, Thomas, who died in July of 2008 and her parents, Carmine and Rosemary.

Surviving are two beloved sons, Thomas J. Daly and fiancé Kathleen McEvoy; and William M. Daly; three dear sisters, Gina Macan, Mary Dilley and husband Robert and Rita Nagy and husband Paul; three much-loved brothers and their wives, Bill and Carol, Joe and Debbie and Steve and Connie Macellara; 11 cherished nieces and nephews, Michelle, Kevin, Katelyn, Brian, Dana, Matthew, Brielle, Sara, Brooke, Courtney and John, as well as many extended family and friends.

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

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Haven Hospice, 65 James St., Edison, N.J. 08820.

Elizabeth "Betty" (Florek) Bilewicz, 97

Elizabeth "Betty" (Florek) Bilewicz passed away on Saturday, Dec. 26 at Arista Care at Cedar Oaks in South Plainfield.

Born in Plymouth, Pa., Mrs. Bilewicz had resided in Nanticoke, Pa. for 20 years before moving to South Plainfield in 1953.

Mrs. Bilewicz was employed for 15 years as a crossing guard for the South Plainfield Police Department at Grant School and later at the corner of Plainfield and Lake avenues before retiring.

in 1975.

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

She is predeceased by her husband, Frank; a son-in-law, Frank DeBernardinis; five sisters and three brothers.

Surviving are two daughters, Gloria "Louise" DeBernardinis of Greentown, Pa. and Violet Ruzicka of Plainfield; two grandchildren, Joseph Ruzicka and wife Geannine and Louise and two great-grandchildren, Nicholas, Christopher and Gianna.

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

Joseph R. Butrico, 97

Joseph R. Butrico died on Wednesday, Dec. 23 in the JFK Haven Hospice at JFK Medical Center in Edison.

Born in New York City, Joe moved to South Plainfield as a child and resided in the borough ever since.

He worked for the Borough of South Plainfield in the sewer department for 14 years before retiring in 1976. Prior to working for the borough, Mr. Butrico worked for the former Cornell-Dubilier as a welder for 12 years. In addition, Joe worked for the shipyard in Perth Amboy during WWII, Harris Steel Co. in South Plainfield, and during the 1930s, Mr. Butrico worked as an ice cream maker for the former Costa Ice Cream Co. in Metuchen.

A longtime communicant of Our Lady of Czestochowa RC Church, Joe was also a member of the South Plainfield Italian American Club.

He is predeceased by his wife, Rose E. (Gandocs) who died in 1995; two sisters, Mary and Josephine Butrico, and by three brothers, John, Carmen and Frank.

Surviving are three daughters, Anna M. Casella of Manalapan, Josephine Cerreta and husband Michael of New Mexico and Rose B. Ayers and husband Fred of South Plainfield; two sisters, Theresa DiSesso of South Plainfield and Grace Scala of Pennsylvania and a brother, William of Florida. Also surviving are five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were under the direction of the McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals.

Donations may be made to Our Lady of Czestochowa RC Church, 120 Kosciuszko Ave., South Plainfield, N.J. 07080.



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police report

On Dec. 8 Charles F. Robinson, 60, of Plainfield was arrested for driving on a suspended license, fictitious plates, lack of insurance and registration and on two outstanding warrants.

An Easton Boulevard resident reported the theft of a large landscaping rock from in front of their residence.

A Piscataway resident reported their vehicle had been keyed while parked at Burlington Coat Factory.

On Dec. 13 a Woolworth Avenue resident reported the wires on their Christmas lights had been cut.

On Dec. 15 Temitayo O. Ajayi, 39 of North Bergen was arrested for lack of insurance, driving on a suspended license, brake light out, failure to exhibit documentation and on an outstanding warrant.

A Delekas Avenue resident reported the theft of a freezer with 360 lbs. of

deer meat in it that was in front of their garage door.

A Selene Avenue resident reported their unlocked vehicle had been ransacked while parked in their driveway. Nothing was taken.

A Clinton Avenue resident reported the driver's side window of their vehicle had been smashed and a Magellan GPS was taken.

On Dec. 19 Flooring America on Hadley Road reported the front window of the store had been smashed. Nothing was taken.

An Atlantic Street resident reported the windshield of their vehicle had been smashed.

On Dec. 20 a Sampton Avenue resident reported the wires to their 1974 Simplicity Hyperstatic tractor had been cut.

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