

South Plainfield OBSERVER

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60 CENTS

DECEMBER 16, 2011

Sewer Increase Goes Into Effect Jan. 1

By Jane Dornick

The Borough Council passed a resolution to increase the sewer tax by 1½% at a public meeting held on December 5.

The increase amounts to an additional \$5 per year for homeowners, increasing the annual fee to \$320, which is billed twice a year in March and October. For those who qualify for a senior reduction, the increase is \$2.50 a year. The increase will take effect on January 1.

According to CFO Glenn Cullen, "This is just a pass through of the increase that the Middlesex County Utility Authority (MCUA) levied to the Plainfield Area Regional Sewer Authority (PARSA), and PARSA in turn, levied to the borough."

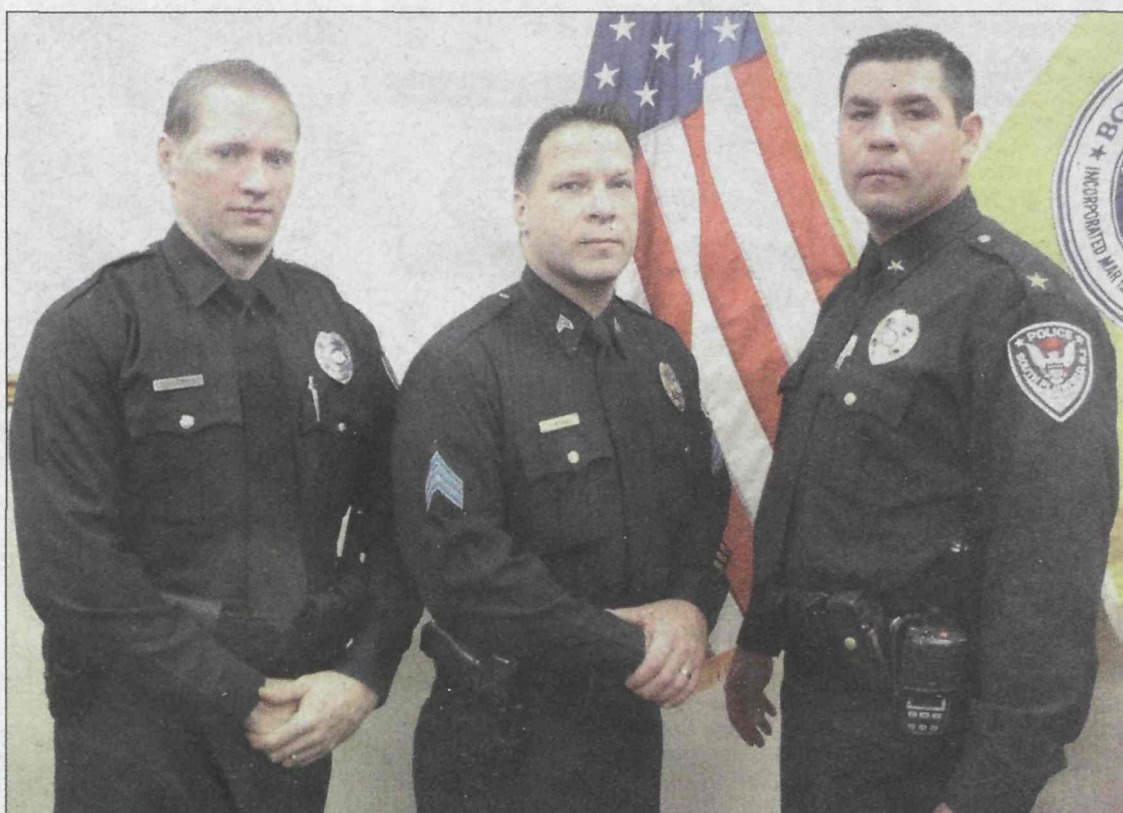
The last sewer tax increase was in January when MCUA increased its sewer treatment rates. The hike forced the borough to raise rates by more than 11%, the largest line item increase in the borough's sewer utility budget.

Along with the unanimous approval of the increase, the governing body sent

a copy of the resolution to MCUA stating, "This rate increase will directly increase the sewer fees paid by businesses and residents of South Plainfield during a national recession and during a time that these businesses and residents can least afford an increase." It also asked them to "find ways to cut its costs and, if need be, utilize more surplus, in order to reduce and rescind any rate increase to MCUA users, including PARSA and the Borough of South Plainfield." A copy was also sent to all PARSA and MCUA members, the clerk of the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders and all of its members.

Democrats Chrissy Buteas and Franky Salerno both voted no to the latest increase. Buteas said, "The council has done nothing to try and correct some of the system's problems that are occurring, which are escalating the billings to South Plainfield; for instance, the infiltration problem during rain."

"We have been laser focused on managing property taxes in the borough through cost reduction wherever possible," said Mayor Matt Anesh.



(L-R) Sergeant Daniel Hoppe, Lieutenant Daniel Noonan and Police Chief James Parker.

Two Police Officers Promoted

Two South Plainfield police officers were promoted during the Borough Council meeting held December 5. Sergeant Daniel Noonan was promoted to lieutenant and Officer Daniel Hoppe was promoted to sergeant.

Lt. Daniel Noonan is a 15-year veteran of law enforcement, having joined the South Plainfield Police Department in January 1996. He served as an officer in the patrol section of the Operations Division and later as a detective in the Criminal Investigation Bureau. After obtaining the rank of sergeant in 2004, he again served in the patrol section of the Operations Division. For the past six years, Noonan served as a detective sergeant in the Criminal Investigation Bureau of the Service Division.

Noonan will assume the role of commander of the Service Division, which is comprised of a sergeant, three general assignment detectives, two juvenile detectives and a secretary.

Noonan is married and lives in South Plainfield. He graduated from Rutgers University in 1994 with a bachelor of science degree. He served as an agent for the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office before joining the South Plainfield Police Department.

Sgt. Daniel Hoppe is a nine year veteran of law enforcement. He joined the South Plainfield Police Department in January 2005. He served as a patrolman in the Patrol Section of the Operations Division. He previously worked for the New York City Police Department, walking a foot post in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn for the 67th Precinct and the Mount Olive Police Department for the Patrol Division. Hoppe will assume the role of patrol shift supervisor and will provide direct supervision to ap-

proximately six patrol officers during their tour of duty.

Until recently, Hoppe was a life-long resident of South Plainfield, graduating from South Plainfield High School in 1997. He attended William Paterson University, where he received a bachelor of science degree

in exercise physiology.

Hoppe has been married to wife Vanessa, for four years. They have a daughter, Adriana. Hoppe is the son of Charles and Merry Hoppe and has three brothers, Charles Jr., Michael and Matthew, and a sister, Jillian.



Santa Claus visits with children at the Knights of Columbus breakfast.

Knights of Columbus Host Breakfast with Santa

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus Council #6203 held its annual Breakfast with Santa at the council's hall on December 3. The breakfast was held for all of the members' children and the community to celebrate "Keeping Christ in Christmas."

The Knights served eggs, bacon and French toast to all who attended, and of course, there was a visit by Santa Claus for the children. Santa entertained the children with Christmas stories and games, and everyone had

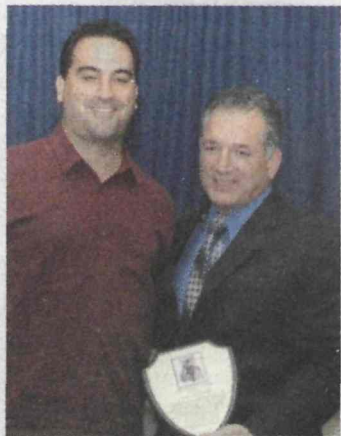
a great time.

The Knights would like to thank everyone who attended, especially Tom Berry, who chaired the event, and Roberto Morales, who cooked all of the food. A special thanks goes out to Max Waldrop, who played Santa.

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus would also like to wish the entire South Plainfield Community and our armed forces abroad a very Merry Christmas.

—Submitted by
Grand Knight Joe Scrudato

Ashnault Honored At Night of Tribute

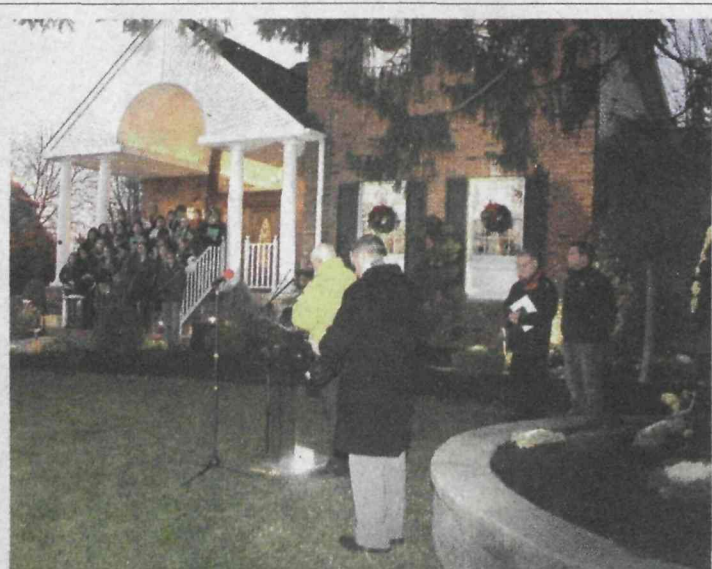


P.A.L. Vice President Gary Cassio presents the Cappy Award to Bill Ashnault.

A crowd of almost 200 gathered at the senior center on December 3 to honor Bill Ashnault, the latest recipient of the Cappy Award. The impressive attendance was an endorsement of this year's choice for the award, named for the late Deputy Police Chief Tulio "Cappy" Capparelli, which recognizes those individuals who selflessly donate their time for the betterment of the youth of South Plainfield. The award is presented annually by the South Plainfield Recreation Department and the South Plainfield Police Athletic League (P.A.L.).

Master of ceremonies was Bill Ashnault.

(Continued on page 6)



The lawn of the McCrisky-Gustafson Home For Funerals was the setting for the annual tree lighting honoring the memory of the men of Task Force 3-502 101st Airborne Division Screaming Eagles. For story, see page 7.



Want to stay informed about the business of your Council and BOE?**FYI****Borough Council & BOE**

Council meetings air on Comcast Channel 96 Mondays at 7 p.m. BOE meetings air on Thursdays at 7 p.m.

To purchase a complete copy of a council or BOE meeting, contact the Observer. (Check Comcast community bulletin board for last minute time changes.)

council meetingsMeets twice a month on Mondays, *except where noted.
Borough Hall Council Chambers • Questions? 908-226-7605Agenda Meeting
December 19Public Meeting
December 19

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 boardMeets 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 Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave.
Committee of the Whole meetings (begin at 6:00 p.m.)
Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 14 and April 4.
Regular Public Meeting (begin at 7:30 p.m.) except where noted*
Dec. 21, Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 21, April 11.**BOE curriculum/technology/student activities**Meets once a month at 4:30 p.m. in 2nd floor conference room,
Roosevelt Administration Building on Jackson Ave.
Monday, Dec. 19**BOE buildings & grounds**Meets second Monday of the month at 7 p.m., 2nd floor conference room,
Roosevelt Administration Building**cultural arts commission**Meets the third Tuesday of the month at the PAL at 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 20**library board of trustees**

Meets once a month on the second Tuesday, at the library at 7 p.m.

recreation commissionMeets 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.
Dec. 20**environmental commission**Meets once a month (second Wednesday) Borough Hall Conference Room, 8 p.m.
Questions? 908-226-7621**business advisory group**

Meets once a month (first Wednesday) Borough Hall Council Chambers, 5 p.m.

ad hoc alternative truck route committee

To be announced. 7:30 p.m. in the Senior Center Questions? 908-226-7605

Too cold to go out? To get home delivery of the Observer,
call (908) 668-0010 or email spobserver@comcast.net.**South Plainfield Observer**The South Plainfield Observer is published weekly on Fridays
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SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLESWe encourage the submission of stories and photos. To have 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 story idea, contact the editor at (908) 668-0010.

The publisher is not responsible for typographical errors.



Volunteers (pictured) who helped serve the holiday lunch for the mentally challenged, sponsored by Plainfields Chapter of UNICO. Approximately 100 attended the event held last Saturday after a special mass at Sacred Heart Church. Santa arrived after the lunch to distribute gifts to each guest.

Bergen, Middlesex and Passaic Counties Added to Federal Disaster Declaration for October's Storm

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved Bergen, Middlesex and Passaic Counties for federal disaster reimbursement to cover public sector damages and costs related to the severe storm on October 29.

"Further review of the state's request has resulted in eligibility for recovery assistance for three additional New Jersey counties," said Governor Christie. "Now, Bergen, Middlesex and Passaic Counties can fully recover from one of the most intense early season storms that our state has experienced in recent years."

In the aftermath of the October storm, Governor Christie sent a formal request to the White House for federal disaster assistance. A comprehensive storm damage assessment led by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in conjunction with federal, county and local officials was completed. On December 1, FEMA approved of the counties of Cape May, Essex, Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren for aid. The announcement of eligibility for Bergen, Middlesex and Passaic counties follows continued work by state, federal and local officials to fully determine the level of damage, and brings a total of 11 counties eligible under

the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance Program.

The state, county and local governments, and certain eligible private nonprofit organizations can apply for assistance on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the storm. New Jersey Office OEM officials are scheduling meetings for

the newly designated counties regarding the application process.

State and local emergency management officials are currently managing the recovery related to four active Presidential Disaster Declarations. More information about these declarations, and the recovery process, can be found online at: www.fema.gov/news/disasters_state.fema?id=34.

In My Opinion

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

Dear Editor,

Christmas is my favorite time of the year and I love playing Santa. As every child knows, Santa navigates his sleigh by following the Christmas lights right to the homes of kids that have been good (and sometimes bad) to give them their gifts.

I think the children living along Hamilton Boulevard may be waiting a little longer this year. About half the street lights are out because whoever put the wreaths up didn't do a very good job (they qualify as naughty on Santa's list).

Maybe the mayor or one of the members of the council could act as Santa's helper and get them fixed

before Christmas Eve. Santa is not a big believer in the old adage 'close enough for government work.' The taxpayers are making a list and checking it twice.

**ED KUBALA (AKA SANTA),
FORMER BOROUGH COUNCILMAN****Submit Your Letters to the Editor**Send your letters to South Plainfield Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd., Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, or fax to 908-668-8819, or via email: spobserver@comcast.net. **Deadline is Monday, 5 p.m.** Letters must be accompanied by a name and telephone number for verification. 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. Submission is not a guarantee of publication. We do not accept anonymous letters. Letters are strictly opinion.

Now is a perfect time to sell your coins & unwanted gold to raise some holiday cash!

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From the South Plainfield Library

Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

We know you're probably busy right now, what with buying gifts, putting up decorations, mailing cards, testing your tolerance for fruitcake, and such. But, let's take a brief respite from the holiday season (whichever holiday you're celebrating) and relax with news from the South Plainfield Library.

First up, a word about our schedule. We'll be closed on Sunday, Dec. 25 in observance of Christmas Day, and Monday, Dec. 26 in observance of Mixed Martial Arts Day (sorry, Boxing Day). The following week, we'll be closed on Sunday, Jan. 1 and Monday, Jan. 2 for New Year's Day. Keep an eye on our website for any last-minute changes.

We'll be following our usual schedule of children's programs next week. For those of you who may have forgotten that schedule due to our hiatus, here it is again: We'll have "Storytime" for children three and over 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 two and three, will be held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30. And "Babytime" for children two and under will be held on Friday morning at (again) 10:30. (Oh, and just a word that children's programs are cancelled the following week.) Each program lasts about an hour and features stories, songs and a craft activity for older kids. You don't need to pre-register for these programs. For more information, give us a call and ask for Miss Linda or Miss Mija (see below for the number).

We've got a couple of programs on the horizon for young people. First, for the kids, there's a return appearance by longtime favorite Mr. Kurt on Wednesday, Jan. 11 at 6:30 p.m. He'll be performing over at the senior center, just down the road from us. You don't need to pre-register for this. We do ask that, in lieu of an admission fee, that you bring non-perishable food items for the Middlesex County Community Food Drive. Next, for older kids, there's a jewelry making program on Monday, Jan. 30 at 6:30 p.m. It's open to young people from seventh grade and up. The program is presented free of charge. Space is limited, so you must pre-register. Again, you should check with Miss Linda or Miss Mija for more details.

In spite of the late start, we've had a fine result for this year's "Books to Keep" drive. At last report, we've collected 317 books for children and young people. A very special "thank you" to everyone who contributed books or cash to the drive. Feel free to start collecting books for next year.

We'll finish up this week with a reminder about the winter season (which, technically, hasn't started yet). We fully expect to get some inclement weather (okay, snowstorms) over the next three or so months. This may result in our having to close up shop early, or be closed for a whole day.

(That sounds somewhat familiar.) If it looks like this will happen, and you're not sure of our status, don't hesitate to give us a call to confirm. You can also check our website (see below for the address), or check radio stations WAWZ (99.1 FM), WCTC (1450 AM) or NJ 101.5 FM, along with their respective websites. In any case, if the weather is bad, don't risk your neck to get that copy of "Cowboys and Aliens" back to us; we'll take the weather into account.

That's all for now. For more information, call us at (908) 754-7885. You can also visit our website at www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us or check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/southplainfieldlibrary. And we hope you're having a happy and safe holiday season.

St. Stephen Christmas Worship Schedule

St. Stephen Church, located at 3145 Park Ave., will hold Christmas Eve services at 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Christmas Day worship will be held at 10:30 a.m.



Volunteers hand out dinners to attendees at pasta dinner.



Pop Warner Cheerleaders Host Pasta Dinner

By Patricia Abbott

The South Plainfield Pop Warner Eagles Cheerleaders held the annual pasta dinner on November 23. The event was held in the high school cafeteria prior to the pep rally and bonfire, and gave the girls, their families and guests a chance to enjoy the rally and cheer on the South Plainfield High School Tigers and see the Tiger cheerleaders perform. It also offered those at the rally an opportunity to enjoy a great home cooked meal.

The menu offered a wide variety of

pasta with choice of sauce including marinara, meat sauce, Alfredo, garlic and oil or butter, as well as baked ziti, meatballs and homemade macaroni and cheese, salad, bread, soda, coffee and homemade desserts and pies. The food was cooked and served by over 40 parent volunteers. More than 300 people attended the dinner, which was the largest turnout to date.

The pasta dinner began four years ago by the first Pop Warner Eagles cheer team to make it to the Nationals and was called, "The Road to Nationals Pasta Dinner Fundraiser." All proceeds go directly to the girls

to help offset the cost of the trip. The estimated cost for the trip to Nationals is \$30,000.

The food was donated by the Boyle Foundation and the parents of the competition cheerleaders. The move to the high school prior to the rally proved to be a success and they hope it will become an annual event. After the bonfire, the high school football team and fire department members were treated to a buffet dinner.

The Junior Midget cheer squad competed at the Pop Warner Little Scholars National Dance and Cheer Competition on December 7 in

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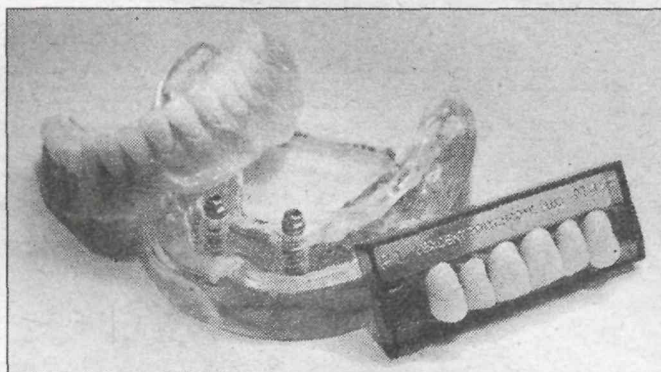
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events

Around Town

Senior Center 2012
Annual Membership fees
(\$10) are now due!
Please stop in & check out our
new and exciting programs.

Chinese Auction & Family Fun Day

December 17 (New Date)

The Time2Shine Foundation, a non-profit organization formed in the memory of South Plainfield resident Mike Fry, will hold a Chinese auction and family fun day on Saturday, Dec. 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Italian American Club, 1001 Garibaldi Ave. Admission is \$5 for adults; children are free. Photos with Santa, face painting, food and bake sale. Door prizes. Theme baskets, gift cards, a TV, a laptop, iPad, Kindle, airline tickets and more will be raffled.

Proceeds are donated to young students interested in continuing their education in the arts and sports.

For more information or to make a donation, call Rosemary at (908) 816-0901 or Angela at (908) 400-7259.

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American Legion Holiday Buffet

December 18

American Legion Chaumont Post #243, 243 Oak Tree Ave., will host a special holiday buffet breakfast on Sunday, Dec. 18 from 8 a.m. to noon. Served by the auxiliary, menu items include bagels, eggs, casseroles, French toast and pancakes. Cost: \$6 for adults and children over 12; \$3 for children seven to 12; and kids six and under eat free.

Craft vendors will offer last minute shoppers a chance to buy a variety of things, including blouses, and paintings by South Plainfield artist and framer, Tom Seiz. Santa will also be there to say hello to everyone.

Also coming in February is a special Valentine's Day brunch. Watch the *Observer* for details.

Christmas Eve Candle Light Service

December 24

Join us for a Christmas Eve Candle Light Service at First Baptist Church of South Plainfield, 201 Hamilton Blvd., on Saturday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. There will also be an 11 p.m. service with Communion and Christmas carol sing-along on Christmas morning at 10:30 a.m.

To pre-register, call (908) 753-2382 or visit our website at www.fbcsouthplainfield.com.

— Out of Town —

Kenny Vance at Forum Theater

December 16

Kenny Vance and The Planotones will be performing on Friday, Dec. 16 at 8 p.m. at the Forum Theatre Arts Center, 314 Main St. in Metuchen. Tickets are now on sale at www.forumtheatrearts.org.

Crossroads Holiday Jubilee 2011

December 16 & 18

Crossroads Theatre, 7 Livingston Ave. in New Brunswick, will present Holiday Jubilee 2011 on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 16 and 17 at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday, Dec. 17 and Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$40; \$65 for opening night (includes a reception.) Two children under 12 admitted free with purchase of adult ticket.

To purchase tickets, call (732) 545-8100 or online at www.CrossroadsTheatreCompany.org.

A Christmas Carol; Frosty The Snowman

December 16-18

The Downtown Players, part of Lambertville's Downtown Performing Arts Center, will be performing *A Christmas Carol* and *Frosty the Snowman* at the South Hunterdon Regional High School Theatre located

at 301 Mount Airy-Harbourton Rd. in Lambertville.

A Christmas Carol will be performed on Friday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 17 at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$17 for adults and \$12 for children and seniors.

Frosty the Snowman will be performed on Saturday, Dec. 17 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for children and adults.

Holiday Brass Ensemble at Kean

December 18

Holiday Brass, an annual tradition of sonorous arrangements of music for brass and percussion, will be presented on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. in the Gene and Shelley Enlow Recital Hall at Kean University, 215 North Avenue in Hillside.

Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased by calling Kean Stage Box Office at (908) 737-7469, online at enlowhall.kean.edu, or in person at Kean University's Wilkins Theater Box Office.

Singles Pre-New Year's Dance Party

December 30

Steppin' Out Singles will be hosting a pre-New Year's upscale singles dance party at the Woodbridge Hilton, 20 Wood Ave. South in Iselin on Friday, Dec. 30 at 8 p.m. Ages 40 and up. No jeans/t-shirts/sneakers/shorts.

SENIOR CENTER Calendar

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON
December 17, 12 to 4 p.m. - \$12
Delicious food and entertainment

MONDAYS
Active Seniors 8:30 am
Crocheting 9:30 am
Yoga 10:30 am
Art Class 11:30 am

TUESDAYS
Bingo 10 am-2 pm
Ladies Group 10 am

WEDNESDAYS
Exercise Class 8:45 am
Shopping 9 am
Line Dancing 10 am
Computer.. 10 am, 11:30 am, 1 pm
Crocheting 1 pm
Tai Chi 2 pm

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

FRIDAYS
Bingo 10 am-2 pm
(No Bingo December 16)

****BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!****
Looking for members 55 or older to join our Billiards Club. Ladies are welcome.
If you enjoy shooting pool, stop in the senior center to sign up. It's fun and FREE!
Daily Activities: Morning coffee, pool, cards, board games, art, yoga and crafts.
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CHRISTMAS EVE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

Masses at 5:00 PM and 12:00 Midnight

Be sure to arrive early

4:30 PM Prelude with the living Nativity and Youth Choral & Handbell Choirs

and

at 11:20 PM Scripture and Choral Prelude with the Adult Choir

CHRISTMAS DAY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

Masses at 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30 — 9:00 AM

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

World Day of Prayer for Peace

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

Masses: Saturday - Vigil 5:00 PM
Sunday - 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

Masses: Saturday - Vigil 5:00 PM
Sunday - 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM

The Children's "Procession of Stars" is at 9:00 AM

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD MONDAY, JANUARY 9 — 7:00 PM

BOE Resumes Search for Superintendent

By Libby Barsky

The Board of Education is re-opening its search for a superintendent for the district, placing an ad in the *Sunday Star Ledger* on December 11 and posting the information at www.spboe.org.

According to BOE Vice President Debbie Boyle, 22 resumes were received during the initial search in September, and four candidates were subsequently interviewed.

The board is seeking an individual who possesses the necessary New Jersey School Administrator Certificate, has prior experience as a superintendent or assistant superintendent in a K-12 district, has demonstrated success in areas of curriculum, finance, public relations and planning, and possesses strong leadership, team building and conflict resolution skills as well as experience in applying current educational research and in No Child Left Behind achievement measures.

Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume and certifications by email to the Human Resources officer, Ttempe@spnet.k12.nj.us by Dec. 22, and will receive an electronic application package by return email.

Other positions posted are: Director of Special Services; Assistant Transport Supervisor possessing specialized training related to transportation at a minimum salary of \$39,900 (apply by Jan. 19); Accounts Payable Clerk at a salary of \$33,817-\$52,645 according to experience; Instructional Support Aides: Kennedy School working with multiply disabled children and an aide at Riley School; Grant School long term substitute from Jan. 2 to May 2012; Riley School fourth grade long term substitute from Feb. 13 to May 18, 2012.

BOE Public Meeting Time Changed

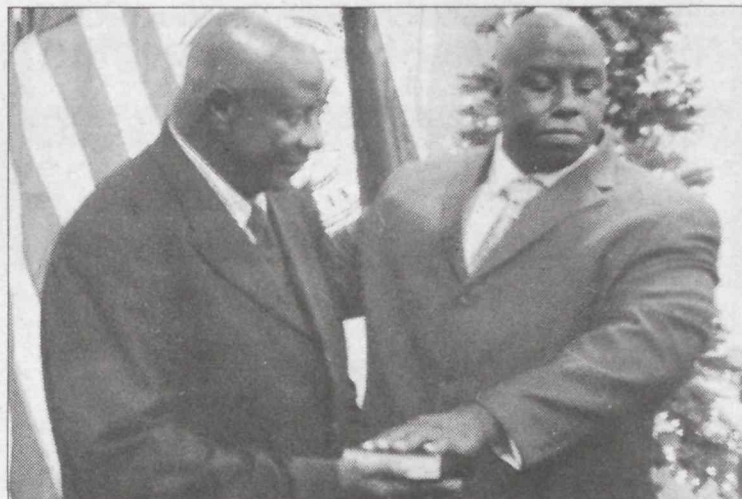
Please be advised that the time for the Regular Public Meeting of the Board of Education on Wednesday, Dec. 21 originally scheduled for 7:30 p.m. has been changed to 6 p.m. This meeting will be held in the gymnasium of the Roosevelt Administration Building, 125 Jackson Avenue.



Michael Eugene Sikanowicz, Jr. and his parents, Mike and Mary Sikanowicz, and sister Erin.



Christopher Robles and mom, Nancy Robles.



Christopher Reid and his dad, Carlton Reid.



Brian Zielinski and his parents, Lori and Mark, and sister Kaitlyn.

Who's Who Among the Recent Police Hires

Four new police officers were sworn in at the December 5 Borough Council meeting. They each came to the South Plainfield Police Department through varying avenues.

Christopher L. Reid resides in Newark. He graduated from Weequahic High School in Newark in 1994. He attended the Metropolitan Institute of Network Technology, graduating in 1998. He graduated from the Newark Police Academy in 2010 with a certification of completion in the Basic Course for Police Officers. He was previously employed by Newark

Police Department from July 2002 to December 2010.

Christopher L. Robles resides in Newark. He attended Theodore Roosevelt High School, Bronx, NY, graduating in 2002. He attended Essex County College in 2006. He graduated from the Newark Police Academy in 2008 with a certification of completion in the Basic Course for Police Officers. He was previously employed by Newark Police Department from July 2008 to November 2010.

Michael Eugene Sikanowicz, Jr. is a South Plainfield resident. He gradu-

ated from Bishop George Ahr High School in 2002 and Rowan University, Glassboro in 2006 with a bachelor of arts degree in health and exercise science/teacher certificate. He successfully completed the alternate route program for police officers at John H. Stamler Police Academy, completing the Basic Police Training Course mandated by the N.J. Police Training Commission. He graduated in 2008. Prior to being hired as a police officer, he was employed by Bishop Ahr High School as a physical education teacher.

Brian P. Zielinski is a South Plain-

field resident, graduating from South Plainfield High School in 2005. He earned an associates degree in criminal justice at Middlesex County College in 2007, and a bachelor of arts in criminal justice from Kean University in 2009. He graduated from the Somerset County Police Academy in 2010 with certification as completing the Basic Course for Police Officers. He was previously employed by Westfield Police Department in September 2011 and owns a landscaping business in South Plainfield.




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\$65 Eyelash Extension <small>With coupon only. Not to be combined with any offer or gift certificate. Expires 12/31/2011</small>	New Customer Special (Any service) <small>With coupon only. Not to be combined with any offer or gift certificate. Expires 12/31/2011</small>	

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Cappy Award winner Bill Ashnault (second from left) with Bobby Capparelli (center) and Ashnault's family (L-R: son Bill, daughter Carley, wife Sue and son Anthony).

Ashnault Honored at Night of Tribute

(Continued from page 1)

Cochrane, who is also president of the South Plainfield Recreation Commission. The invocation was given by Calvin Gross, vice president of the Recreation Commission. Speakers included Mayor Matt Anesh, former Recreation Director Michael English, Tom McCreesh, Bill's brother Mark, his son Bill, PAL Vice President Gary Cassio and Tulio Capparelli's son Bobby. All speakers talked about Ashnault's volunteerism, coaching skills and his ability to instill honor and respect to youth throughout his long career.

In addition to the prestigious Cappy Award, Ashnault received proclamations from both the New Jersey State Assembly and the mayor and council. His name will now be added to previous recipients names inscribed on the Wall of Honor at the PAL building. Past Cappy Award recipients are Ed Niemczyk, Charles Decker, Salvatore "Buddy" Severini, Philip

Aiello, Richard Curcio, Armando "Arti" Fiore, Owen Kelly, Nancy Pauls, Jack English, Art Devine, William Cochrane, Sr. and Richard Plate.

Ashnault has volunteered his time in coaching youth wrestling, baseball, football and field hockey. Coaching his children wasn't enough for Bill; he continued to coach kids in the middle and high schools as well.

Ashnault's career began in 1985 when he volunteered to serve as assistant wrestling coach with the high school. He held that position until 1998 and then went on to volunteer his time as the middle school wrestling coach. Ashnault also served in various capacities with the South Plainfield Wrestling Club, including president. He is presently serving on the board of trustees. He was instrumental in running tournaments, organizing fundraisers and contributing to the expansion of the PAL building, all on a volunteer basis.

Ashnault was a volunteer coach for tee ball and teener ball at the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club, also serving on the executive board on several committees including building and grounds and canning. In addition, he coached the all star teams for over 10 years. He also volunteered as a Pop Warner coach for one year.

After attending recreation meetings for years, Ashnault was appointed to the Recreation Commission in 2001. During his tenure the lights and facilities were upgraded at the football, baseball and soccer complexes, the PAL building was expanded and a new state of the art turf field was installed behind the PAL building.

When accepting the award Ashnault said that he was honored to be among the recipients of the Cappy Award. He also added, "I couldn't have done all of the accomplishments contributed to me alone. On behalf of everyone who helped, I accept this award."

Commended Students in the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program

South Plainfield High School Principal, Dr. James Pedersen, proudly announced that James Butrico, Michael Grzenda and Nicholas Pleeter have been named Commended Students in the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program. A letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, will be given to these scholastically talented seniors.

About 3,400 Commended Students throughout the nation are be-

ing recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2012 competition for National Merit Scholarships, Commended Students place among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2012 competition by taking the 2010 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

"The young men being named Commended Students have demon-

strated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation. We hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities and encourage them as they continue their pursuit of academic success."

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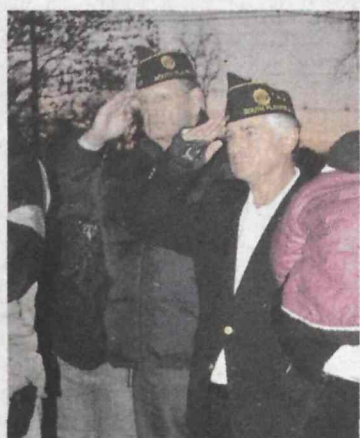
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27th Annual Tree Lighting Honors Victims of Plane Crash

For the 27th year, the 85 foot high fir tree that sits on the front lawn of the McCrisky-Gustafson Home For Funerals was the center of attention during the tree lighting ceremonies last Saturday. When lit, the magnificent tree can be seen several blocks away.

The first tree lighting was held in December of 1985 in memory of the tragic plane crash in Gander, Newfoundland, Canada which occurred on December 12, 1985. Two hundred and forty-six servicemen, all members of the 101st Airborne Screaming Eagles, and eight crew members were killed shortly after take-off. They had been on their way home for the holidays, returning from a peace-keeping mission in Egypt. The disaster, one of the worst in Canadian aviation history, is still shrouded in controversy.

Members of the South Plainfield High School Traveling Choir, led by Joan Stasio, entertained the crowd by singing holiday songs before, during

and after the ceremony.

More than 100 people attended the ceremony, including Mayor Matt Anesh and members of the council.

The tree lighting ceremony began with a welcome by Rick McCrisky. Rev. Charles Mingle read the invocation. McCrisky gave a short explanation of why the tree is lit each year. He also read a poem dedicated to those who died in the plane crash.

Pulling the switch to light the tree was Rev. John Paul Alvarado, Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, who was joined by members of the South Plainfield Pop Warner Junior Midget Cheerleaders. *Amazing Grace* was played by the bagpipers, followed by *Taps*. The Eagles cheerleader teams have been part of the tree lighting for several years now. Father Alvarado closed the ceremony with a prayer.

Santa and Frosty the Snowman arrived via fire truck just as the ceremony was ending. After spending time greeting the children, they led



the way down Plainfield Avenue to Flanagan's for a reception. They were followed by the members of the choir, who led the carolers in singing holiday songs.

Earlier in the day, members of the Screaming Eagles General McAuliffe Division placed a wreath commemorating the event at the base of the tree.

AFP Planning Fundraiser to Help Rattlesnake Victim

Almost Famous Players (AFP) is organizing a fundraiser for young Zack Szala, the nephew of Plainfield Animal Hospital receptionist Barbara Drumwold. The eight year-old was bitten twice by a rattlesnake in his home state of South Carolina in late November. The mutant snake carries two venoms, both highly poisonous.

His condition is serious. He has regained movement in his lower limbs, but is unable to breathe on his own. He communicates by squeezing a hand for yes or no. His aunt described him as a bright, happy child, full of life. The antivenin costs between \$2,500 and \$4,000 per vial; so far the child has had 40 vials and is in need of more. The family has no medical insurance.

His hometown and school have been holding fundraisers and sending him pictures, cards and voicemail message. His uncle, who lives in Lake Hopatcong, has started fundraising there as well.

AFP is planning a coffeehouse. A half dozen performers/bands have expressed an interest so far. We are searching for the best venue, and are in need of more performers, donations of cash, door prizes, etc. We hope to hold a separate children's show featuring a local professional juggling group.

To help, email angelonly@aol.com or call (908) 346-2290.

Tax Office Now Accepting Online Payments

The South Plainfield Tax Office is now accepting online payments for both property tax and sewer bills.

Property owners should go to www.southplainfieldnj.com and click on "Pay Taxes Online" to pay their bill.

Convenience fees apply and are as follows: ACH or e-check \$1.05; Visa Debit \$3.95; all other debit and credit card payments will be approximately 2.95% of your total bill.

Payments can still be made at the tax and sewer office (open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

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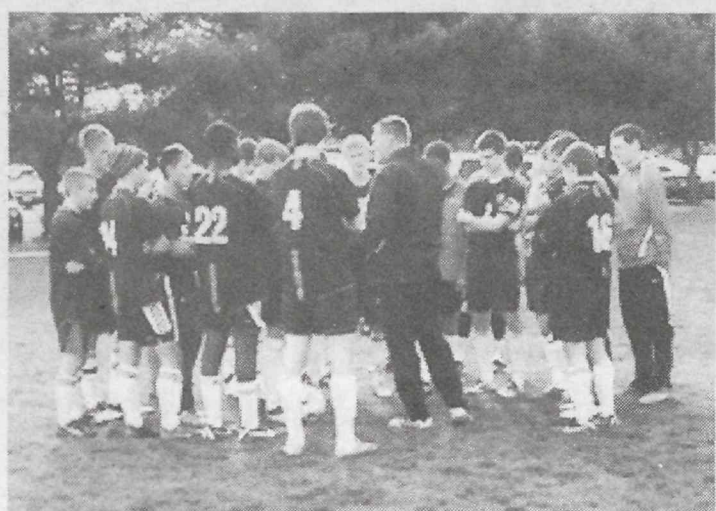
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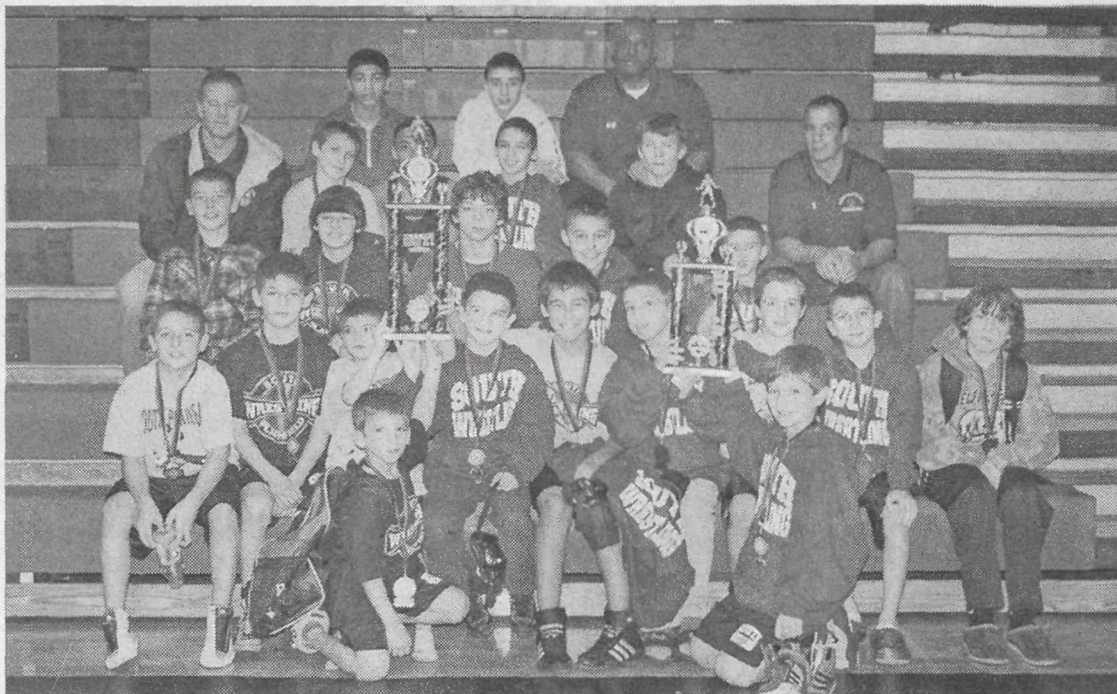
sports



The Jersey Knights U17 Gunners soccer team, coached by Kevin East along with South Plainfield goalie Patrick Boyle, won the U17 Brick Township Soccer Tournament on November 20. Over 30 teams participated in the games.



The Scotch Plains-Fanwood U19 Flash soccer team won the Fort Dix Soccer Tournament at the military base on November 26. More than 50 teams participated in games. South Plainfield players were Shaun Alers, Jeffrey Giron, Daniel Lyew and Patrick Boyle as goal keeper.



SP Wrestlers Take Third at Robbinsville Duals, Wins Sportsmanship Award—The recreation and middle school wrestling teams joined forces to take third place out of eight teams at the Robbinsville Duals. The team was also awarded the Good Sportsmanship Award by the tournament referees. Front row: Jake Giordano, Alex Amato, Jake DelVecchio, JJ Giordano, Joe Heilmann, Mike Marrero, David Loniewski, Anthony Penyak, Joe Sacco, Jack Campagna, Ryan Duhamel; second row: Joe Penyak, Richie Marcovecchio, Christian Gonzalez, Brenden Hedden, Anthony White; third row: Coach Sacco, Connor Adams, Darius Mullens, Tommy Fierro, Christopher Maszczak, Coach Giordano; back row: Desmond Santos, Dan Hedden and Coach Green. Not pictured: Zach DelVecchio, Ryan Marston, Coach DelVecchio, Coach Amato, Coach Loniewski and Coach Heilmann.

U-9 FURY

Submitted By Dawn Hutchison

Fury Completes Their First Season This Fall

The South Plainfield Soccer Association welcomed a new addition to its team roster this fall, the U9 Girls team, Fury. Brand new to the club, 13 girls came together for the first time and immediately showed signs that this was something special. Many of the girls knew each other, while several were just meeting for the first time. For many, it was just another natural step in their soccer experience; for others their first experience in soccer entirely. But in the end, a determined, energetic group of young ladies proved that they had what it takes to compete with the best.

Fury had a very challenging season from the get go; tough competition only made them stronger in the long run. Despite being flighted with tough competition, Fury fought through each game and grew stronger by season's end.

Having a nearly scoreless first half of the season, Fury came back to score goals in the second half of the season and give their opponents a hard time scoring with a tough defense. There was no question the girls stepped up their game. Coaches from the opposition commented on how much these girls progressed from their first meeting and realized they would be a force to be reckoned with in the future.

Offensive players Olivia Olano, Alexis Robinson and Lauren Hutchison led the team in goal scoring with strong offensive support by Deleaney Born, Jordan Sacco and Kimberly Velez. Midfielders Rebecca Hollo, Olivia Ardito and Gianna Glover provided pressure every chance they could. Defenders Grace Raber, Jenna Sacco, Courtney Nagy and Natalie Leonardis all worked to stop their opponents from scoring.

Goal tending was shared by Olivia Olano, Lauren Hutchison, Natalie Leonardis and Courtney Nagy, with



U9 Girls team, Fury

Natalie and Courtney doing the great- est share of the time in goal.

The greatest asset these girls had on the field was a positive attitude. With tough competition and lack of experience against them, Fury never let it get the best of them. Their determination to do better every time, to practice hard and pull together proved that they were a real team.

All the coaches couldn't be prouder, as are the parents and families of all the girls, and the team is looking forward to a great spring season.

Thanks to Coaches Don Ardito, Wendell Born and Gino Leonardis for all the help. Thanks to Joe Evans for helping in the early stages of practice and Tim Nagel for sharing his coach's wisdom.

To all the parents and families, thank you for all the support on the sidelines and every day with the positive encouragement of the girls.

Most of all, thanks to each and every one of the girls of Fury. A

wonderful group of young ladies, they exemplify what it means to be true competitors; the right attitude, the desire to play and the determination to step it up. They are guaranteed to be better, stronger players come spring. They stepped on to the field for the first time in September as a brand new team, and left the field in November as true soccer players.

Let's go Fury!

Hoop Shoot Rescheduled

South Plainfield Elks will hold the annual hoop shoot on Saturday, Dec. 17 at SPHS from 1-4:30 p.m. Register from 1-2 p.m.

Boys and girls ages 8-13 as of April 1, 2012 may participate. Proof of age is required.

For more information, contact Bill Reuter after 3 p.m. at (908) 380-4863.

SPHS

WEEKLY SPORTS SCHEDULE
South Plainfield High School

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

3:45pm G Fr Basketball - Sayreville (A) Bus 2:30
3:45pm V Swimming - Wardlaw (A) Bus 2:30
3:45pm B Fr Basketball - Sayreville (H)
7:00pm GV Basketball - Sayreville JV/5:15 Bus 3:45
7:00pm BV Basketball - Sayreville (H) JV/5:15

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

8:00am B&G Winter Track - Toms River (A) 2 Buses 7:00am
G&BV Bowling - Baker Trn @ Carolier (A) Bus 8:00am
VWrestling - Morris Knolls Trn (A) Bus TBA

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19

3:45pm G&BV Bowling - Colonia @ Carolier (A) Bus 2:30
5:30pm JVWrestling - JP Stevens (A) Bus 3:30

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

3:45pm B Fr Basketball - Cardinal McCar. (A) Bus 2:30
3:45pm G Fr Basketball - Hudson Catholic (H)
7:00pm BV Basketball - Cardinal McCar. (A) JV/5:15 Bus 3:45
7:00pm GV Basketball - Cardinal McCar. (H) JV/5:15

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

7:00pm VWrestling - Edison (H) JV/5:30
V Swimming - Woodbridge (A) Bus TBA

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

3:45pm G&BV Bowling - Piscataway @ Carolier (A) Bus 2:30
7:00pm VWrestling - Bergen Catholic (A) JV/5:30 Bus 3:15

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23

3:45pm G Fr Basketball - Piscataway (A) Bus 2:30
7:00pm GV Basketball - Piscataway JV/5:15 Bus 4:45

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Obituaries

Richard (Dick) A. Cohen

Richard (Dick) A. Cohen, CPA of Plainfield, passed away on Thursday, Nov. 17 at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick.

Dick was born on December 3, 1943 in Brooklyn, N.Y. He is an alumni of Midwood High School class of 1961. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. Upon being honorably discharged from the service, Dick and wife Alison married in 1968, and then relocated to Ithaca, N.Y. where he majored in accounting at Ithaca College. After graduation, they moved back to Brooklyn and then relocated to Plainfield, where they have lived for the past 40 years.

During those four decades, Dick worked for various accounting firms until the 1980s when he established his own firm, R.A. Cohen, CPA of Middlesex. He was an avid devotee to the Brooklyn Dodgers, a Boy Scout leader and a member of the MENSA Society.

Dick is survived by his wife, Alison; a son, Andrew Jonathan; and by two older brothers, William Colin and James Cohen.

A memorial gathering will be held on Saturday, Dec. 17 at 1 p.m. with the service reflecting on Dick's life at 2 p.m. at McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals, 2425 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield.

Dick will be deeply missed and his passing will be greatly felt by his family, his friends and his clients; all of whom felt he played a significant role in their lives.



Richard (Dick) A. Cohen

Pauline H. Faso, 102

Pauline H. (Deninto) Faso died at her residence on Sunday, Dec. 11. Born in Manhattan, Pauline has been a resident of South Plainfield since she was nine years old.

Pauline retired from Universal Vest Company in Plainfield after many years as a seamstress. She was a member of Sacred Heart RC Church and belonged to the Rosary Altar Society.

During the time of WWII, Pauline assisted the American Red Cross sewing garments for the service. She was active with the Girl Scouts and was a former scout leader for Grant School in South Plainfield and she enjoyed needlepoint and crocheting.

She is predeceased by her parents, John and Theresa (Sully) Deninto, her husband Ignatius, who was a South Plainfield Volunteer Fireman for over 44 years and by her two sisters, Palma Abbruzzese and Julia Mastrangelo.

Pauline leaves behind her niece and caregiver, Loretta and her husband Steve Letostak, and many extended family and friends.

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

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the South Plainfield Fire Department or to the South Plainfield Rescue Squad.

Julius J. Peterson, 84

Julius J. Peterson died on Friday, Dec. 9 at JFK Medical Center in Edison. Born in Newark, he was a resident of South Plainfield since 1960.

An honorably discharged veteran of the United States Army, Julius

served his country during WWII and received the Philippines Independence Ribbon and the WWII Victory Medal. He was a 51 year lifetime member and five time commander of the South Plainfield VFW Post #6763 and was very active with the Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S., a division of the VFW whose members devoted their time volunteering at many veteran affairs. He was a 35 year member of the American Legion Post #243 in South Plainfield. He enjoyed traveling and time spent at the beach in Wildwood Crest.

He retired as a carpenter and was a past president and delegate with Union #155 formerly of Plainfield (presently located in Cranford.)

He is predeceased by his wife Gloria (Wist) Peterson, who passed away on February 4, 2000; a sister, Eleanor Reed; and by an infant brother, Norman.

Julius leaves behind two children, Dawn Moss and husband Robert of South Plainfield and Susan Pepe and husband Eric of Flemington; his loving companion, Dorothy "Dot" Poeltler of Edison; two grandchildren, Richard and Lauren Moss; and a sister, Alma Spicer of Florida.

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

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the American Heart Association, 1 Union St., Suite 301, Robbinsville, N.J. 08691.



Pauline H. Faso

Joseph M. Krizan, 74

Joseph M. Krizan died at home on Thursday, Dec. 8 surrounded by his loving family. Born in Butler, Pa. to his late parents, Michael Thomas and Stella Rose (Gornitsky) Krizan, he spent most of his life in Plainfield and North Plainfield and has been a resident of South Plainfield since 1993.

He is honorably discharged from the United States Navy attaining the rank of BTEN. He spent 35 years employed for Elizabethtown Water Company as a supervisor and was known to many as a "ladies man." He enjoyed music, liked to fish, and in his earlier years, was an avid bowler.

He is survived by three children, Joann Solimani and husband Joseph, Michael and fiancé Annette Nardiello of South Plainfield and Anthony and wife Robin of Branchburg. He will be missed by seven grandchildren and three siblings, Carol Anne Schmedes of Ohio, Francis Avery of Pennsylvania and Thomas Krizan of New Jersey.

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

As a 16 year heart recipient, donations in Joseph's name have been requested to the NJ Sharing Network Foundation, 691 Central Ave., New Providence, N.J. 07974 or to the American Cancer Society, 2600 US Highway 1, North Brunswick, N.J. 08902.

William C. Glass, 77

William C. Glass passed away peacefully on Thursday, Dec. 8 at St. Clare's Hospital in Dover.

Born on April 1, 1934 in Newark, son of the late Charles and Anna Glass, he settled in South Plainfield in 1966.

Mr. Glass was the general manager for Newark Truck Parts in Newark for 42 years. He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps after faithfully serving from 1951-54 during the Korean War. Bill enjoyed trips to Atlantic City, watching movies and sharing dinner with his feline friend, Lucy.

Mr. Glass was predeceased by his wife of 41 years, Jean Glass, who passed away in 1997; his mother-in-law, Jeanette Dering; a son-in-law, Mark Chobotor; three brothers-in-law, Robert Costello, Raymond O'Neill and Thomas Glennon; and his best friend, Tony Gordon.

Loving memories are left to two daughters, Debbie and husband Glen Perrette of South Plainfield with whom he lived, and Victoria Chobotor of South Bound Brook; and a son, William and wife Lisa of Brick. Happy memories are left to six grandchildren, Matt and Phillip Perrette, Jacque and Jessica Glass and Kayla and Karl Chobotor; always remembered by three sisters-in-law, Carol Costello of Winter Haven, Fla., Rosemarie O'Neill of Manahawkin and Gertrude Karousatos and husband Nick of Hillsborough; and a brother-in-law, Henry Schadt and wife Grace of Clark.

He is also survived by many nieces, nephews and friends.

Once a marine, always a marine.

Funeral services were held at South Plainfield Funeral Home.



William C. Glass

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BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

December 9, 2011—Public Notice is hereby given that the following action was taken by the South Plainfield Board of Adjustment at its meeting held on December 8, 2011.

A. Case #34-11—Karen & Rodolfo Aguilar, Block 75; Lot 2; R-10 Zone, 2604 Maple Avenue. The applicant's request to leave an existing deck and shed in their present location was hereby GRANTED subject to additional voluntary conditions.

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

\$28.50

December 9, 2011

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In Loving Remembrance

Abigail M. Kuberiet

December 18, 2001—November 5, 2003

It has been 8 years since we saw your sweet smile and golden hair... Mommy and Daddy think of you every minute of every day hoping you are happy and well in Heaven. You are 10 years old and everyday we dream you are here with us. You will always be our little Abbie and forever safe in the arms of God.

Love & Miss You Always, Daddy, Mommy, Christopher, Caleb & Celeste Kuberiet



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It's a Winner!

Charlie and Debbie Kurland of Hometown Heros deliver dinner to Junior Journalist winner Jason Rossow pictured with his mom, Kelli; dad, Robert; and grandparents, Eileen and Robert.



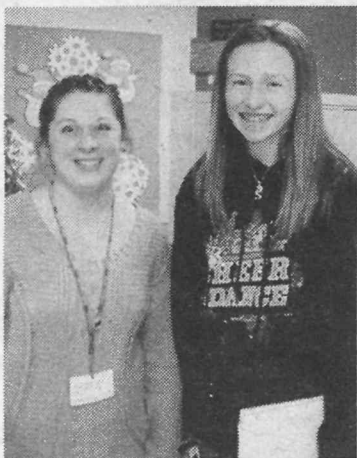
Makowski Named Junior Journalist

Middle School seventh grader Ally Makowski is this week's winner in the Junior Journalist program. Her short story, "The Haunting of Abigail Tremens," has earned Ally dinner for her family, courtesy of Hometown Heros.

The program, which encourages students to express themselves through creative writing, is a joint cooperation between Hometown Heros and the South Plainfield Observer.

Students should submit their original works to their teachers, the Observer or to Hometown Heros. Winners are selected weekly; students and their works are published in the Observer. Hometown Heros makes arrangements to deliver dinner for the winner's entire family.

At the end of the school year in May, Hometown Heros and the Observer hosts a banquet celebrating all of the weekly winners and their families. A \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond



Ally Makowski with her teacher, Kristin Bennett.

is awarded to one student by Hometown Heros; additional U.S. Savings Bonds are also awarded. Students are recognized by the mayor and the state assembly as well.

For more information, call the Observer at (908) 668-0010.

The Haunting of Abigail Tremens

By Ally Makowski

"Just let me know if you need a different size," said the salesgirl. "I will," said the older woman, slipping into the dressing room and closing the door behind her.

Emma Hupper had needed a new bathing suit but hadn't wanted to shop for one until she lost a little weight. At her age, she found it harder than ever; though finally this year, Emma had managed to stick to her resolution. Emma adjusted the strap and examined herself in the mirror. The floral pattern was flattering; the skirt flared out at the waist and hid the spots that needed to be hidden. "Perfect," Emma whispered to herself. She lived so close to the beach but hadn't been in the water for at least a decade. This would be a nice change, something other than playing bingo with the rest of the white-haired ladies in the retirement community. The door rattled and Emma jumped. "There's someone in here!" She waited for an apology but none came. "Rude," she whispered. She and Bill had left Massachusetts almost twenty years ago, but Florida never really felt like home. So many tourists always passing through. So many seasonal friends who came and went.

Emma often had to force herself to remember New Starkham. This bathing suit was her special way of trying to get some of that feeling back, if only to swim in the same ocean she had when she'd been young. Not that all memories of her hometown were pleasant. The doorknob rattled harder this time as if someone was frantically trying

to enter the dressing room. Emma nearly fell against the wall. "There is someone in here!" she called again angrily. Probably just teenagers playing pranks, she imagined, catching her breath. Well, the bathing suit fit, so Emma decided to hurry up and let the pranksters tease someone else. When she bent down to pick up her blouse, someone slapped the door so hard that Emma yelped, leapt upright, and clutched her shirt to her chest. The slap came again, again, and again. She could see under the door, but no one was standing outside.

Now, Emma was frightened; she knew it wasn't the salesgirl doing this to her. She was almost certain that whoever was assaulting the door was no prankster either. For the past few weeks, she'd been seeing things she should not be seeing. She managed to dismiss the other incidents as exhaustion, but this was something she could not ignore. She was trapped in a tiny room, wearing a bathing suit that not yet belonged to her and outside was... well... no, that was impossible. There was no such things as ghosts. Emma reached for the doorknob. Grasping it, she turned her wrist slowly, then pulled the door open. Peeking out, she saw... no one. So, she swung the door wide. But then, standing in the opposite cubicle, Emma noticed the girl. Her wet, black hair was plastered to her dirty face, her brown skin pulled taut over her cheekbones. She wore the same stars-and-stripes she'd been wearing the last time Emma had seen her... nearly sixty years ago.

"Delia," Emma croaked. Her sister.

The girl leapt across the aisle, arms raised, and Emma stumbled backward. "It was your fault!" screamed the girl. "You weren't watching. You weren't watching. YOU WEREN'T WATCHING!" Emma hit the mirror behind her and covered her face. "I'm sorry!" she cried, sliding down the wall until she managed to curl herself up in a ball on the carpet. "I'm sorry Delia! Please!" She felt someone grab her at her shoulder. Emma slapped the hand, then glanced up, expecting to see Delia lean in at her with a mouthful of broken teeth. Instead, the salesgirl stood over her wearing a shocked expression. "Is everything alright ma'am?" Emma didn't know what to do. Lifting her eyes, she peered at the aisle outside the dressing room. No one else was there. She shook her head, and wiped her tears from her eyes. "Everything is fine," Emma said standing sturdily. She brushed herself off. "The bathing suit fits perfectly; I'll take it." The salesgirl nodded and stepped out of the cubicle. Then, a voice whispered from the adjacent dressing room, the same voice she'd been hearing for several weeks now. Whenever she thought of her sister, it said: "Your fault..." "Wait!" Emma grabbed the salesgirl's arm. The salesgirl look worried. "Can you do me a favor?" asked Emma. "Just... stand outside this door? Make sure no one tries to come in?"

The salesgirl simply stared back, as if Emma had lost her mind.

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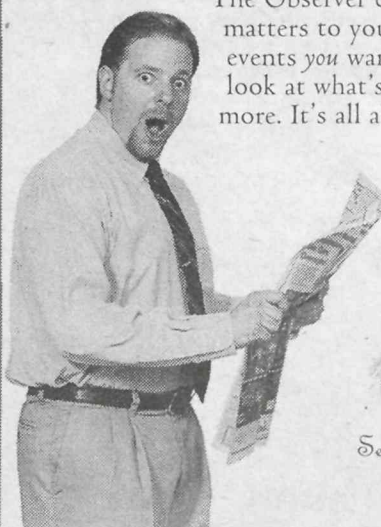
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Midnight Madness Kicks Off Basketball Season

By Patricia Abbott

The South Plainfield High School Varsity and Junior Varsity Boys and Girls basketball teams celebrated the start of their season by borrowing the college tradition, Midnight Madness. The event was held in the high school gym on December 2 and began at 9 p.m. so that fans of all ages would

be able to attend. School spirit was in abundance. Hundreds of fans, along with the freshman boys team and coach Bill Schulte, were on hand to lend their support. A number of eighth grade basketball players also attended.

Norm Loenser was emcee for the evening. Band Director Roger Vroom and his newly formed Pep

Band performed for the first time. Lending their support were high school competition and winter cheerleaders and coach Georgeanne Larsen.

Midnight Madness offered a number of contests for the teams and audience members. Teams participated in a three-point shooting contest and a dunk contest.

Audience members received a ticket when entering. Those lucky enough to have their number called had the opportunity to participate in one of several contests such as half court shot, dribble knock out, lay-up, foul shot, three point shot contest and dribble relay with a partner from one of the teams. Prizes included Rutgers t-shirts and Rutgers basketball tickets.

The highlight of the evening was a game between the girls and boys. The boy's team won, 18-13. The girls won the three point and dunk contests.

There were three judges at the event, who were selected for their past contributions to South Plainfield basketball.

They were: resident Mike Alloco the owner of AKA. He played at Union Catholic High School, Stone Hill Col-

lege and professionally in Europe. He served as a volunteer coach at SPHS.

Darren Smith, a 2005 SPHS graduate, played on the high school basketball team that won back to back county championships in 2004 and 2005. He had 27 wins and one loss in 2004. He also played Division I basketball in the Ivy League at the University of Pennsylvania.

Mike Benak, a 2005 SPHS graduate, was the leader of a large fan group that supported the 2004 and 2005 teams. He is a third year law student at Seton Hall.

Even those who didn't participate in a contests had the chance to win a prize; 85 t-shirts donated by AKA

and Sportworld were thrown out to fans by the cheerleaders. AKA also donated trophies. There were over 360 people in attendance, the teams, coaches and high school staff brought the total to over 400.

The Midnight Madness tradition has an interesting history. The governing body of college sports, the NCAA, tells schools what date they may begin practice. A number of years ago colleges decided to start practice at midnight on that date, the first minute they were allowed to practice. They made a celebration of it and included their fans. SPHS Athletic Director Al Czech came up with the idea to create a high school version.

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