

# South Plainfield OBSERVER

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## A COMMUNITY MOURNS

*Fiery Inferno Claims the Lives of Four Children and Grandmother*



Shaquan Phillips, 15, saved the life of his two year old sister, Angel Taylor.



A memorial of flowers and balloons at the curb in front of the home where five victims died.

By Jane Dornick

An early morning fire claimed the lives of four children and their grandmother at the two family home they rented at 1407-1409 Clinton Ave. last Thursday. Fire Chief Tom Scalera called it "the worst tragedy in South Plainfield history."

According to family, neighbors and the Board of Education website, the victims were Ann Jefferson, 62, who lived in the 1407 side along with five grandchildren, Alizae Jefferson, 12; Tyler Davis, 7; Christopher Jefferson, 5; and Elijah Taylor, 2. Their eight year-old brother, Jordan Jefferson, survived and remains in The Burn Center at St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston.

The children's mother, Natalie Jefferson, 33, escaped from the other side of the duplex along with two of her children, Shaquan Phillips, 15, and Angel Taylor, 2, who all sustained minor injuries. Her housemate, Dietra Jackson, 42, and daughter Victoria Carden, 20, also survived.

The police and fire departments received a call at 3:09 a.m. reporting a fire at what is known as the Stockoff Farmhouse, circa 1869. According to Scalera, firefighters were on the scene in less than two minutes. "This was an incredibly fast moving fire," he said. "The studs were

lined with bricks which created a virtual caldron within the structure. All of these ingredients created this disastrous set of circumstances. Fire temperatures within the structure are estimated to have been nearly 2,000 degrees." When firefighters arrived at the scene, they had difficulty gaining entry to the first and second floors because of the extraordinary volume of flames and smoke. "There was just so much heat and fire," said Scalera. The fire was extinguished by 6:30 a.m.

According to CFO Glenn Cullen, there have been three reported fires in the home in the last 30 years.

Shaquan, a freshman at the high school, is said by neighbors to have been seen carrying his sister, Angel, from the home. The boy attempted to go back inside to retrieve additional family members, but was held back by police.

Ronald Taylor, father of the child whom Shaquan saved, said that the teenager's "act of heroism would not be forgotten. The school should recognize him for his courage." Taylor's other son, Elijah, perished in the fire. "He [Shaquan] is a great kid with a great heart. He loved his brothers and sisters so much he was willing to die to save them. The other children in the school should think about him and wonder if they could do what he did."

Enroute to the scene, Firefighter Nick

Smith collided with another vehicle. His sport-utility vehicle rolled over three times according to Scalera, but Smith got out and went to work, joining more than 40 other volunteers despite his minor injuries.

At a press conference held last Friday by borough officials Scalera said, "There appears to be no functioning smoke detectors or alarms in the 1407 portion, but there were functioning alarms in 1409. The origin of the fire, or preliminary focus of where the fire began, appears to be the kitchen area located on the first floor of 1407. All five victims were found on the second floor of 1407 in a room above the kitchen."

There are unconfirmed reports that the landlord had replaced the batteries in the smoke detectors and that they were functioning as of last October.

"On behalf of our community, I want to send my heartfelt condolences to the family of those whose lives were taken yesterday," said Mayor Matt Anesh at the press conference. "I, along with members of the Borough Council, spent the day yesterday with members of our fire department, police department and Office of Emergency Management. We've pledged the full support and resources of the borough to these departments as the investigation moves forward. Our local police are working cooperatively with the



**"The worst tragedy in South Plainfield history"**

—Fire Chief Tom Scalera

Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office and other county and state agencies to thoroughly investigate the cause of the fire. It is important that we let these professionals do their jobs so we can know exactly what happened and take steps to see that a tragedy like this never takes place in South Plainfield again."

Anesh also praised the outpouring of support from the community. He said that local restaurants have donated food for family members and that they received "hundreds of calls from residents offering assistance."

A drop off center was set up at the Senior Center beginning last Saturday and throughout the week to collect food, clothing and other household necessities. Because of the over abundance of items they received, Hall's Fast Motor

(Continued on page 10)





## In My Opinion

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

### To the Editor:

We see your pain, we feel your pain. Just a note to say thank you to our volunteer fire department, rescue squad, OEM and the police department for all you do for the residents of South Plainfield.

May God bless you and keep you safe. Also a thank you to the other towns and the county for being there for the residents of South Plainfield.

SINCERELY,  
MARION AND DAN GALLAGHER

### 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](mailto: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.

### 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 meetings

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

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

Agenda Meeting

Public Meeting

March 5

March 5

March 19

March 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 board

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

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

March 13, March 27, April 10, April 24, May 8, May 22, June 12, June 26, July 10, July 23\*, Aug. 14, Aug. 28, Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 9, Oct. 23, Nov. 13, Nov. 27, Dec. 11

### zoning board of adjustment

Meets first and third Tuesdays of the month, \*except where noted.

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

March 6, March 20, April 3, April 17, May 1, May 15, June 5, June 19, July 3, July 17, Aug. 7, Aug. 21, Sept. 18, Oct. 2, Oct. 16, Nov. 20, Dec. 4, Dec. 18

### board of education

Meets Wednesdays at Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave.

Committee of the Whole meetings (begin at 6:00 p.m.) March 14 and April 4.

Regular Public Meeting (begin at 7:30 p.m.) except where noted \*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.

### 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.

March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19, July & Aug.-No Meeting, Sept. 18, Oct. 16, Nov. 20, Dec. 18

### library board of trustees

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

March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11

### recreation commission

Meets once a month on the second Tuesday of the month, except July and August

## South Plainfield OBSERVER

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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.



Representatives from six local charities accept donations from Mayor Matt Anesh from the proceeds of performing wedding ceremonies this past year.

## Local Charities Benefit from Wedding Ceremonies

South Plainfield Mayor Matt Anesh presented six checks totalling \$4,050 to six local charities. The donations came from the fees he received for performing 27 wedding ceremonies in the borough this year. Donating the fees has become a South Plainfield tradition in the past years. The following charities received checks:

**South Plainfield Domestic Violence Support Team (\$1,350)**—The team consists of specially trained volunteers who assist domestic violence victims. Volunteers respond at a time of crisis to help victims get through the “golden hour” of intervention. Volunteers complete a 40-hour training course; receive an additional four hours of training and serve with an experienced team member during their initial months. “The borough is grateful to have a dedicated team of volunteers who perform such a critical role for our residents in need,” said Anesh. Accepting the donation were Sandy Severini and Barbara Gillen.

**Elks Camp Moore (\$300)**—South Plainfield resident Pete Smith, a member of both the South Plainfield Elks Lodge #2298 and South Plainfield Planning Board, will take part in the

fifth annual Elks Miracle Plunge on March 10. Smith and about 100 other Elks will raise money for the Cooley’s Anemia Foundation, a foundation dedicated to serving people afflicted with Cooley’s Anemia; Elks Camp Moore, a camp for children with special needs funded by the New Jersey Elks; and the Children’s Specialized Hospital.

**The Pink SOCS Foundation (\$600)**—Sisters of Cancer Survivors, the Pink SOCS Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of families in their communities that have been affected by breast cancer and other forms of cancer. Founded in 2005, the foundation began as a way for the Dispenziere sisters to attempt to fight back at a disease that had affected four of the nine sisters. The foundation raises money by holding charity events and directly donating those funds to families in need that have been affected by cancer. Donations are also provided to research facilities to help find a cure.

**The Brayden Carr Foundation (\$600)**—In Brayden’s Eyes, the Brayden Carr Foundation was established by Jim and Natalie Carr,

parents of the late Brayden James Carr, a two and a half year old whose life was much too short. The foundation hopes to provide athletic, social, rehabilitative and academic opportunities to children with seizure conditions and their related physical needs, as well as provide humanitarian support/relief to their parents. The foundation has a volunteer staff and 100% of net proceeds go directly to a scholarship fund.

**The Buddy Walk of South Plainfield (\$600)**—The Buddy Walk was established in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October and to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down Syndrome. On October 8, 2011, the Buddy Walk of South Plainfield held its eighth annual walk in Putnam Park. The Buddy Walk of South Plainfield was established in 2004 by Michele Both after her son Kyle was born. Michele’s desire was to bring acceptance and awareness for individuals with Down Syndrome.

**The Time2Shine Foundation (\$600)**—The foundation was founded in 2011 by Ken and Kathie Fry of South Plainfield in memory of their son, Michael J. Fry. Michael was a 2004 graduate of South Plainfield High School, an avid musician and fan of the NY Yankees and Knicks. Michael belonged to Boy Scout Troop 17 and the South Plainfield Elks Troop 2298. The foundation provides funding to young students interested in continuing their education in the arts and sports. In addition, the foundation looks to assist sports programs for children where those programs are supported by donations.

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## BOE Special Business Meeting

Please be advised that the Board of Education will hold a special business meeting on Monday, March 5 at 7 p.m. for the adoption of the proposed tentative 2012/2013 budget. Action will be taken. The meeting will be held in the gymnasium of the Roosevelt Administration Building, 125 Jackson Ave.

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From the South Plainfield Library

## Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

Welcome to March, which is coming in like a... surprisingly mild and unthreatening lion. How it'll go out, we can't tell yet. But, as we're waiting to see, here's news from the South Plainfield Library:

We'll start this week with a look at our children's programming:

On Monday at 6 p.m., we hold our "Movie Night" presentation for young people. It's being presented free; no pre-registration required. Please call us for title and content information. (See number below.)

Our "Storytime" program, for children ages three and over, is held on Tuesday morning at 10:30, Wednesday evening at 6:30 and Thursday afternoon at 1:15.

"Time for 2s & 3s" is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30.

"Babytime," for children age two and under, is set for Friday morning at 10:30.

Each of our story programs lasts about an hour and features stories, songs and a craft activity for older kids. They're all presented free; you don't need to sign up. For further details, call us and ask for Library Director-Elect Miss Linda or Miss Mija.

We've also got a couple of programs coming up for adults. First, we'll be hosting a meeting for the newly-revived Friends of the Library on Tuesday, March 20 at 7 p.m. It's for those who've already signed up for the group, and those interested in doing so. (You don't need to be a South Plainfield resident to sign up.) We'll be going over general plans for the group and give new sign-ups some information about the library.

On Wednesday, March 28 we'll be hosting a program by East Brunswick-based Innovative Document Imaging.

(You may know them as the company who've been digitizing our periodical files and library documents.) They'll be here from 5:30-8:30 p.m., giving information on how their company can digitally and professionally preserve your family memories (i.e. your videotapes, films, photos, slides and scrapbooks). Be advised that, if you sign up for their service at this program, 20% of the revenue generated will benefit the library and its programs. (And, no, your humble correspondent doesn't get a cut of that.)

Finally, a bit of a clarification: as you may be aware, we have placed a limit on how much we will charge in fines for a specific item, outside of other library fees. Specifically, we won't charge beyond the price we paid for the item itself. We believe that's a fair way to approach the matter, since it means you won't be paying tons of money for an item we paid less than five bucks for. However, please understand that this doesn't mean you can borrow an item forever, pay the charge, then keep it. To be honest, we'd prefer to have our stuff back. It allows us to keep things available for other patrons, and saves us the trouble of trying to replace an item, especially if said item is out of print or very rare (like some Disney videos, for example). So, if you want to buy the item, we'd rather you go to an actual store for it and bring the things you borrowed back. It's better for everybody involved, and we'd really appreciate it.

That'll do it for this week. To find out more, check our website at [www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us](http://www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us) or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/southplainfieldlibrary](http://www.facebook.com/southplainfieldlibrary), or call us at (908) 754-7885. Thanks for your attention, and a belated Happy St. David's Day. *Cymru am byth!*

## American Legion Grant Program Available for Veteran's Education

Any veteran who has completed or will be completing active duty this year is eligible for the 2012 American Legion Post #243 grant. This grant, similar to the Post #243 scholarship, is open to any South Plainfield resident who is pursuing his or her education after serving in the military.

According to Commander Joe Penyak, "Many residents have joined the military right after high

school. We want to give a deserving veteran the opportunity to pursue his (or her) education."

The grant is worth \$1,000, and if the veteran returns for a second year of education, the grant will also be given for that year. The grant and 2012 scholarship applications for high school seniors are available at the post lounge daily after 2 p.m. Deadline for completing applications is May 1.



The Future Stars Red Room want to send a big "thank you" to Hometown Heros which donated containers for the children to decorate for Valentine's Day. The Future Stars send a big hug and kiss too, and wish everyone a very happy Valentine's Day.

## Trees to be Replaced on Lakeview Avenue

By Libby Barsky

Fifteen trees that were removed from Lakeview Avenue to accommodate the decorative light poles will be replaced by the borough this spring. In addition, a "memorial" tree will be planted in Putnam Park near the playground. According to Robert Capparelli, supervisor of the Public Works Department, the original tree was removed due to damage. It had been planted by South Plainfield resident Bob Harding in memory of his neighbor and friend, Bob Emerich, a former South Plainfield firefighter, who is now deceased.

The council awarded the contract to replace the trees to Pat Scanlon Landscaping of New York, the lowest of the three bidders, at \$4,716.

Dr. Alice Tempel, the borough's environmental specialist, said the trees were originally removed several years ago because the roots interfered with the underground wiring needed to install the decorative lighting. Shorter redbud trees, whose growth will not interfere with the wiring, will be planted on one side of Lakeview Avenue, and taller honey locust trees will be planted on the other side.

According to Tempel, public works will ask residents to water the trees to prevent them from drying out.

### In Other Council Business

The borough will apply for a Middlesex County Housing and Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$87,500 to improve senior citizen services and handicap accessibility. The money would be used to pay the salary of the senior center

coordinator (\$12,500), upgrade the auditorium lighting at the senior center (\$20,000), continue the handicap ramp installation program (\$40,000) and upgrade the front entrance of borough hall to make it handicap accessible (\$15,000).

## Barber Shop Robbed at Gun Point

An armed robbery took place at One Stop Barber Shop, located at 10 South Plainfield Ave. on February 25.

The lone suspect reportedly entered the shop at about 6:45 p.m. and asked to use the restroom. When he exited the restroom, he brandished a black MAC-10 gun with an extended magazine and ordered the employees and the customers in the shop to turn over their cash and belongings. The

suspect then fled the area.

The robber is described as a black male, 5' 10" tall, heavy set build, in his late 20s to early 30s, with a dark complexion and a light full beard. He was wearing a black baseball cap, black vest, blue jeans and tan boots.

The robbery is being investigated by Det. Garret Cassio. Anyone with information is asked to contact Det. Cassio at (908) 226-7662.

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## All-You-Can-Eat Spaghetti Dinner

March 11

St. Stephens Lutheran Church, 3145 Park Ave., will hold an all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner on Sunday, March 11 from 5 to 7 p.m. Includes beverage and dessert. Free-will offering. Suggested donation: Adults, \$5; children, \$2. All proceeds will go to charity. No reservations needed.

For more information, call the church at (908) 757-4474.

## 43rd Annual District Music and Art Festival

March 15

The 43rd annual District Music and Art Festival will be held on Thursday, March 15 at South Plainfield High School. The orchestra portion starts at 6:30 p.m.; choral portion at 7:30 p.m.; and band portion at 8:40 p.m.

Artwork will be displayed and the Winter Guard will perform during intermission.

Advanced tickets are \$2; \$5 after March 8. A separate ticket must be purchased for each portion.

Tickets are available online at [www.ticketriver.com/event/2713](http://www.ticketriver.com/event/2713), by contacting Andrew Veiss via email at [aveiss@spboe.org](mailto:aveiss@spboe.org) or by calling (908) 754-4620, ext. 378.

## Blood Drive at OLC

March 16

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church is sponsoring a blood drive on Friday, March 16 from 3 to 7:30 p.m. in the parish hall. Donors must be 18 or older.

For more information, call Dawn at (908) 444-8994.

## Elks Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

March 17

The South Plainfield Elks Veterans Committee, 1254 New Market Ave., is sponsoring its annual corned beef and cabbage dinner on Saturday, March 17 from 4:30 to 9 p.m. All you can eat, includes soda and dessert,

cash bar. Adults, \$12; children, \$5.

For more information, call Lou Peralta at (908) 756-6406.

## Franklin School PTO Auction/Raffle

March 24

The Franklin School PTO will hold its annual auction/raffle on Saturday, March 24. Proceeds will be used to fund several school programs.

If you are a business and would like to donate merchandise, a gift certificate or make a monetary donation, call Tara Rocco at (908) 668-1458.

Tickets are now available by calling Jenn at (908) 769-5849 or Tara at (908) 668-1458.

## — Out of Town —

## Flight School Hosts Open House

March 3

American Flyers Flight School, 50 Airport Rd. in Morristown, will be hosting an open house and barbeque on Saturday, March 3. This free event begins at noon with a BBQ lunch. No reservations required.

For information, call (973) 267-3223 or visit [www.americanflyers.net/about/aviation\\_seminars.asp](http://www.americanflyers.net/about/aviation_seminars.asp).

## Somerset Brass Quintet Concert

March 4

The Fleetwood Museum and Friends of Vermeule Mansion will present a free concert featuring the Somerset Brass Quintet on Sunday, March 4 at 3 p.m. in the restored Vermeule Mansion, 614 Greenbrook Road in North Plainfield. Light refreshments will follow.

For more information, call Nicholas Ciampa at (908) 757-507.

## George Winston to Perform at Kean

March 4

The Gene & Shelley Enlow Recital Hall will present piano legend George

Winston on Sunday, March 4 at 3 p.m. performing selections from his recently released recording.

Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased by calling (908) 737-7469 or online at [enlowhall.kean.edu](http://enlowhall.kean.edu).

## Middlesex East WOWs Business Mtg.

March 5

Middlesex East Widows Or Widowers will conduct a business meeting on Monday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at the Carteret Community Center, Pershing and Cooke avenues in Carteret. All widows or widowers are invited.

For more information, call (732) 969-2228 or (908) 757-0515.

## Learning for Life

March 5

The 82nd term of Learning for Life starts Monday, March 5 at 10 a.m. at the United Presbyterian Church, 525 East Front St. in Plainfield. The one-hour classes are held for 10 weeks on Mondays. The registration fee is \$25, payable to the treasurer.

## Metuchen-Edison Women's Club Mtg.

March 7

Metuchen-Edison Women's Club will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 7 at 7:30 p.m. at The Heritage at Clara Barton, 1015 Amboy Ave., Edison. Guest speaker is Samantha Monday, owner of Gardenia's Floral Shop in Metuchen. The program is free and open to the public.

For more information, call Diana at (732) 548-0925.

## NY Philharmonic Performing at NJPAC

March 9

The New York Philharmonic, under the direction of David Zinman, will perform with Cellist Alisa Weilerstein on Friday, March 9 at 8 p.m. in NJPAC's Prudential Hall.

Tickets are \$40-\$125 and may be purchased by calling at 1-888-466-5722, or by visiting the NJPAC website at [www.njpac.org](http://www.njpac.org).

## Blackrose to Perform

March 10

Blackrose, a band performing classic rock and roll music and today's hits, will perform at the Cambridge Inn, 19 Summerhill Rd. in Spotswood on Saturday, March 10 at 10 p.m. No cover charge.



South Plainfield High School January Rotary Students of the month, Samantha Zelasko and Albert Vill.

## Wesley United Methodist Church Lenten Observances

Wesley United Methodist Church, 1500 Plainfield Ave., invites the community to attend the following Lenten observances.

- Worship Services—Sundays 10:30 a.m. featuring the sermon series, "Connecting with God" by Pastor Gina Kim.
- Maundy Thursday Communion Service—April 5 at 7:30 p.m.
- Good Friday Service—April 6, 7:30 p.m.
- Bible Study—"24 Hours That Changed the World," based on Adam Hamilton's book about the last 24 hours of Jesus' life. Five

sessions beginning March 5 and 6 will feature Adam Hamilton's presentation on DVD and discussions based on the book (\$5) and the DVD. Attendees have a choice of sessions on Mondays from 7:30 to 9 p.m. or Tuesdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Call the church office to sign up and reserve copies of the book.

• Prayer Vigil—Saturday, March 31, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. No reservations needed. For more information, call the church office at (908) 757-2838, visit [www.wesleyumcsp.com](http://www.wesleyumcsp.com) or email [wumcsp@verizon.net](mailto:wumcsp@verizon.net).

## Kindergarten Registration March 5-21

Kindergarten registration for the 2012/2013 school year will be held March 5-21. Kindergarten enrollment packets are available in the enrollment office located in the Roosevelt Administration Building, 125 Jackson

Ave. Enrollment packets can also be downloaded at [www.spboe.org](http://www.spboe.org).

Students entering kindergarten must be five years old on or before October 1, 2012. Enrollment is by appointment only.

## FOR SALE - CUSTOM COLONIAL ON CUL-DE-SAC



Features hardwood floors throughout, spacious kitchen with appliances less than 6 yrs. old, oak cabinets & granite counter tops. Large family room. Crown moldings. Master bedroom has 2 closets, one is walk-in. This home is being sold by the original owner who maintained and loved it.

- 4 Bedrooms • 2.5 baths • 2 enclosed patios/sunroom • Central air (6 yrs. old),
- 2-zone gas heat, furnace & water tank (5 yrs. old)
- Finished basement with kitchen • Formal dining room & living room
- Roof/siding is 8 yrs. old • Property size: 100 x 100 • Fenced in yard.

Please call for viewing appointment: 201-602-1627 or 732-463-8945

## Benefit And Support of The Clinton Avenue Fire Victims

## How You Can Help.

### SEND YOUR MONETARY DONATIONS:

Please make checks payable to: The Boyle Memorial Foundation, a 501 (3) (C) non-profit organization. In the memo portion, put "Clinton Avenue Fire Victims." The Mayor, Council and the Boyle Memorial Foundation will direct these collected funds to the needs and necessities of the fire victims over the next year. Checks should be mailed to: The Borough of South Plainfield, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, N.J. 07080, Attn. Clinton Ave. Fire Victims, or to each school's main office.

"South Plainfield is a close-knit community, and in times like these we pull together."

—Mayor Matt Anesh

## CLOTHING DRIVE

PROCEEDS GO TO FIRE VICTIMS

The South Plainfield High School Baseball Program Teams will host a used clothing drive through The U.S. Clothing Company, on Saturday, March 10, 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. The truck will be located in the Middle School parking lot. Please bag all items: gently used clothing, toys, shoes, purses, bedding, comforters, books. The funds from this drive will be donated to the Clinton Avenue fire victims. For more information, see Coaches Guida, Mosca, Battista, Darby or call Debbie Boyle at (908) 803-1573.

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## South Plainfield Schools Calendar

### District Wide

March 2-"Read Across America" Day  
March 14-Early dismissal all schools/professional day  
March 15-43rd District Music and Art Festival, 6 p.m.  
March 16-Grades 3 to 6, "Name the Labor Day Parade Theme" contest due

### Franklin School

March 5-Market Day pickup 3-4 p.m.  
March 13-PTO Meeting  
March 16-Family Breakfast 7:45 a.m.  
March 24-Auction/Raffle, 6 p.m.  
March 30-Spring Pictures/Sibling group pictures

### Grant School

March 2-Book Fair  
March 12-23-MC Food Drive  
March 20-8 a.m. 5th grade Ace Your Test Assembly  
March 20-9 a.m. 6th grade Ace Your Test Assembly  
March 21-Faculty Meeting  
March 28-Spring Pictures

### Kennedy School

March 2-Ice Cream Kindness Challenge  
March 5-7-Jump Rope for Heart  
March 6-Environmental Assembly 1:45 p.m.  
March 9-March Madness-Father/Son 6-8 p.m.  
March 13-Spring Pictures 8 a.m.  
March 15-Book Fair  
March 16-Book Fair and Book Fair Bingo 6 p.m.

### Kennedy School (continued)

March 20-PTO Meeting  
March 21-School Store  
March 21-Earth Science Assembly 1:40 p.m.  
March 26-Food Drive  
March 30-Clifford Night

### Riley School

March 2-8:45 a.m. Jump Rope for Heart  
March 2-PTSO Father/Daughter Dance 7 p.m.  
March 12-PTSO Meeting

### Roosevelt School

March 6-PTO Meeting  
March 7-Student Council 12:50 p.m.  
March 9-Student of the Month-"Respect"  
March 21-Spirit Day "Backward Day"

### Middle School

March 6-PTO Meeting 6 p.m.  
March 22 & 23-Middle School Play  
April 13-PTO Spring Picture Day  
April 15-In Brayden's Eyes Family Walk/Run 10-11 a.m. PBA-Rutgers Coaches & Alumni Basketball Game  
April 19-PTO Blood Drive at high school 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. students/teachers/staff/public

### High School

March 6-8-HSPA Regular Testing  
March 13 & 15-HSPA Makeup Testing  
April 28-Tiger 24  
May 4-Jr. Prom 7 to 11 p.m.  
June 1-Sr. Prom

Celebrate  
South Plainfield!

milestones

## Lucas Simpson Named to Lafayette Dean's List

Lucas Simpson of South Plainfield has been named to the dean's list for the fall semester at Lafayette College. To qualify for dean's list, a student has to have achieved at least a 3.60 semester GPA out of a possible 4.0.

Lafayette is a top liberal arts college with 2,400 students and 200 full time faculty that offers a wide variety of undergraduate degree programs including engineering. With close proximity to New York City and Philadelphia, Lafayette has one of the highest endowment-per-student rates in the nation. This means ample resources to fuel student research, and provide opportunities for study abroad, internships and field work. It means outstanding facilities, Division I sports and funding for 250 student groups on one of the most beautiful campuses in the country.



Donna Marie and Russell Teller recently celebrated their wedding anniversary with a trip to Cancun.

## Tellers Celebrate 30th Wedding Anniversary

South Plainfield residents Donna Marie Santacross Teller and Russell Edward Teller celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on February 27.

The Tellers were married at St. Joseph's Church in North Plainfield in 1982. They recently returned from an anniversary trip to Cancun, Mexico.

Donna and Russell have three beautiful children, Joey, 24, who works for Valvoline; Toni, 20, is currently studying at Middlesex County College to be a nurse; and Rusty, 16, a junior at South Plainfield High School, who is a talented singer, drummer and musician.

Donna is currently the president of the Boosters of the Musical Arts at South Plainfield High School. Russ is head custodian at a school in Clinton Township.

When asked about his parents, Rusty said, "They are honestly the best parents a kid could ask for. I love them. There is none other like them, especially my father, he's one of a kind. They always support me in all my accomplishments. They met back when Russ worked with Donna's Uncle Rudy and have been in love ever since."

"Happy 30th anniversary Mom and Dad, we love you."

## Okoszkos Named to Dean's List

Jamie Lyn Okosko of South Plainfield has been named to the dean's list at Rutgers University for the spring and fall semesters of 2011. Jamie is majoring in history with geography and psychology as her minors. Jamie graduated from South Plainfield High School in 2008.

Brittany Erin Okosko, a 2009 graduate of South Plainfield High School, has been named to the dean's list at Kean University for the spring and fall semesters of 2011. She is majoring in special education with a second major in psychology.

Nicholas Okosko has been named to the dean's list for the fall semester of 2011. He attends Middlesex County College and is majoring in criminal justice. Nicholas is a 2011 graduate of South Plainfield High School.

## Eric Rhode Named to Kean Univ. Dean's List

Eric Rhode, a graduate of South Plainfield High School, has been named to the dean's list at Kean University for the third consecutive semester. Eric is majoring in communications.



Mike and Carol Grennier, who recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, renewed their vows on February 3. The ceremony was performed by "Elvis" in the Graceland Chapel in Las Vegas.

## OPEN HOUSE - CUSTOM COLONIAL ON CUL-DE-SAC

OPEN HOUSE-Sunday, March 4 • 1-4 pm  
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## 95 Years of Baking Cookies

By Libby Barsky

Girl Scout cookies have been around since 1917 when the girls in Mistletoe Troop in Muskogee, Okla. began selling them to raise funds, five years after Juliette Low organized the first Girl Scout troop in Savannah, Ga. in 1912.

Baking their own cookies was a feature of fundraising for individual Girl Scout troops until 1936. At that time, the national organization began licensing commercial bakeries to produce the cookies. Today, the sale of the commercially baked cookies is the signature Girl Scout fundraising project (during a limited time period) whereby approximately 70% of cookie proceeds stay in the Girl Scout community, with 10% to 15% of the retail sales going to the local troop and 50% to the Girl Scout Council. The balance goes to the manufacturers, according to Jane Becker, South Plainfield Service Unit Manager.

In earlier times, there was a larger variety of cookies to choose from, baked by 29 commercial bakeries. Today, cookies are limited to only eight varieties. In South Plainfield they sell for \$4 a box. Varieties include Thin Mints,

Do-Si-Dos (peanut butter cookie with peanut butter filling), Tagalongs (cookie with peanut butter coated with chocolate), Trefoils (shortbread), Dulce de leche (made with milk caramel chips), Samoas Caramel deLites (a vanilla cookie covered in caramel on top and bottom then rolled in coconuts and chocolate) and Thank You Berry Munch (made with white fudge chips and cranberries). To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts a new lemon cookie is being featured, Savannah Smiles, a zesty lemon cookie covered in powdered sugar with a crescent shape to resemble a smile.

Girl Scouts have begun taking pre-orders by contacting friends and family members. The public will be able to purchase Girl Scout cookies March 23 through 25 at booths at the South Plainfield Post Office, Walgreens, The Bagel Pantry, Cicci's Pizza, Quik Check on Sampton Avenue and Dunkin' Donuts on Maple Avenue.

The Girl Scouts also offer the option of sending boxes of cookies to soldiers out of the country.

For more information, email jane.becker@optonline.com.

## police report

- On Feb. 10 Nia M. Shabazz, 56, of New Brunswick was arrested at Kohl's for shoplifting jewelry, a picture frame, ottoman and candle worth \$246.
- On Feb. 11 Puja Shinde, 27, of Piscataway was arrested at Kohl's for shoplifting clothing worth \$277.
- Jamil Antawn Boykin, 18, of Piscataway was arrested for possession of a controlled substance, distribution of a controlled substance, possession of

drug paraphernalia and possession of a synthetic controlled substance.

- On Feb. 12 Narendra B. Patel, 63, of Edison was arrested at Kohl's for shoplifting a Kitchen Aid mixer worth \$427.
- On Feb. 14 a W. 7th St. resident reported her purse was stolen from a shopping cart at Bravo Supermarket.

- Faiza Abbas, 42, and Ali A. Mohammad, 42, both of Piscataway were arrested at Kohl's for shoplifting clothing, perfume and jewelry worth \$309.
- A Calderone Avenue resident reported that their debit card had been used to make three fraudulent purchases online.

- On Feb. 16 Yihua Liu, 52, of Green Brook was arrested at Kohl's for shoplifting a jacket and three pair of shoes worth \$514.



Eagle Scout Matthew Manning with his parents, Kathy and Don, sister Jenn and Scoutmaster Jeffrey Pauls

## Manning Awarded Eagle Scout Rank

Troop 309 held a Court of Honor last Saturday at Wesley Methodist Church for Matthew Manning of South Plainfield. Matthew is the 33rd scout from the troop to reach the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest achievement in scouting. Only two percent ever achieve this high honor.

Matthew joined Troop 309 in April 2005. The troop is sponsored by Wesley Methodist Church. He moved up through the ranks, reaching Tenderfoot in 2006, Second Class in 2007, First Class in 2008, Star in 2008 and Life in 2009. He earned a total of 26 scouting badges. His other positions and achievements include the Arrow of Light, Librarian, Quarter Master, Assistant Patrol Leader, Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader and Harrison Ford's Young Eagle Association. Matthew has

participated in track for all four years of high school, is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars and attended the National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. After high school he would like to study political science in college.

For his Eagle Scout project Matthew chose the Highland Woods Environmental Education Reserve in South Plainfield. The center consists of a modular double trailer and is used for educational purposes. The trailer was in desperate need of painting. Matthew planned his project with Dorothy Miele, president of the Friends of the Woods Association, a group dedicated to preserving the woods and educating people about the nature in the area.

Matthew procured donations for paint and supplies and then brought members of Troop 309 together and

spent a weekend sanding, caulking and painting the nature center. In all, he spent a total of 159 hours on the project.

Mayor Matt Anesh and Council President Ray Rusnak presented Matthew with a Proclamation on behalf of the Borough Council and personally thanked him for the work he did at the Highland Woods Reserve. Also presenting certificates were Tom Hoff, representing the Elks, and Rich Doerr, representing the American Legion. Matthew also received letters of commendation and certificates of recognition from President Barack Obama, Governor Chris Christie, Vice President Joe Biden, President William Jefferson Clinton and Senator Barbara Buono, just to name a few.

Matthew is the son of Don and Kathy Manning of South Plainfield.

## SPHS Yearbooks

### Available for Purchase

A limited number of 1993 and 1998 South Plainfield High School yearbooks are available for purchase. If you are interested, please email Donna Egan, yearbook treasurer, at [degan@spboe.org](mailto:degan@spboe.org). Sales are final; the price is \$10 each, cash only.

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## Sacred Heart Church

149 South Plainfield Ave.  
South Plainfield, NJ

Rev. John Paul Alvarado, Pastor

### Mass Schedule:

Saturday Mass 9:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m.

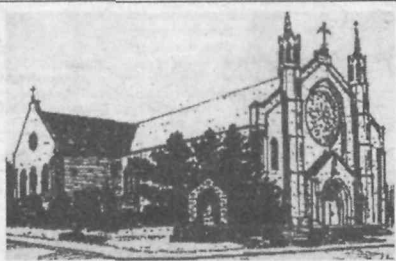
Sunday 9:00, 11:30 a.m.

Daily 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday

7:00 p.m. Monday (Church), Thursday (Parish Center Chapel)

Holy Days 6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation—Saturday 10-11:30 a.m. and at other times by appointment



## J. Patricia DiCarlo, M.D.

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Dr. J. Patricia DiCarlo, M.D.

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# Sports

## Recreation Holds 38th Annual South Plainfield Wrestling Tournament

The South Plainfield Wrestling Club held its 38th annual South Plainfield Wrestling Tournament on February 19. This is one of the longest running tournaments in the State of New Jersey and attracts over 300 wrestlers from around the tri-state area. The following recreation and Middle School wrestlers participated:

**First place**—Noah Santos, Roger Cassett McCoy, Bradley Zelek, Andrew Loniewski, Nicholas Campagna, Jeff Jacome, Jake DelVecchio, Anthony

White, David Loniewski, Joe Heilmann, Michael Marrero, Kyle Bythell, Zachary DelVecchio, Desmond Santos, Dan Hedden, Dion Pender

**Second place**—Chase Donovan, Justus Niemeyer, Bobby Shane White, Derek Glenn, JJ Giordano, Jack Campagna, Xavier Santos, Kenny Clevenger, Nick Loniewski, Justin Bell, Tommy Fierro, Colby Huber, Sebastian Santos, Luke Niemeyer, Johnny Padovano, Joe Sacco, Jacob Panton, Ryan Marston, Jeff Plungis, Ryan Duhamel, Nick Difran-

cesco, John Veraz, Nicholas Gavilanes

**Third place**—Mahmoud Jadallah, Frankie Flannery, Lucas Amato, Robert Barrios, Francis Niemeyer, Christopher Poggio, Mark Molinaro, Zachary Esporin, Tyler Balent, Joseph DiFrancesco, Mikey Kurlew, Alex Amato, Jake Giordano, Connor Adams, Brenden Hedden, Alex Peralto, George Pittenger, Nick Ruzicka, CJ Maszczak, Jarod Borgen, Nam Le

**Fourth place**—Connor Patterson, Louis DiFrancesco, Sean Kyle Doherty, Vincent Conselina, Al Fuschetti, Ryan Luersen, Anthony Cortese, Evan Schimanski, Julian Irizarry, Nicholas Robertson, Michael Niemeyer, Isaias Ramos, Daniel Borsos, Joseph Malavara, Marcus Czarrunchick, Gabriel Panton, Ryan Patterson, Steven Twist, Anthony Penyak, Anthony Malavara, Divon Pender, Ernesto Nieves, Richard Marcovecchio, Nick Scalera, Josh Stassenko, Ben Lundy, Christian Gonzalez, Louis Locacio, Thomas Appolloni

## SPHS to Host 3 on 3 Spring Basketball Charity Classic

South Plainfield High School will host the 3 on 3 Basketball Spring Charity Classic on Saturday, March 31.

Boys and girls ages 10 through 17 are eligible to compete in novice and competitive divisions. All skill levels are welcome; players will make their own teams; maxi-

mum four players per team. Cost is \$120 per team; three games minimum. Register by March 24.

A portion of the proceeds will go to Women's Heart Foundation.

For more information, call (201) 745-4491 or visit [www.wjcsports.com](http://www.wjcsports.com).

## SPHS South Plainfield High School SPORTS SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY, MARCH 2

V Wrestling-State Trn @Atlantic City No Bus

### SATURDAY, MARCH 3

V Wrestling-State Trn @Atlantic City No Bus

### SUNDAY, MARCH 4

Competition Cheering @Sun Nat. Bank (A) Bus TBA  
V Wrestling-State Trn @Atlantic City No Bus

### THURSDAY, MARCH 8

3:45pm V Lacrosse-Randolph JV/5:15 (H)

### FRIDAY, MARCH 9

4pm V&JV Softball-Johnson (H) Sc

### SATURDAY, MARCH 10

10am FR Softball-Millburn (H) Sc  
11am Fr Baseball-Montgomery Sc (A) Bus 9:30  
11am V&JV Baseball-Montgomery (H) Sc  
2pm V&JV Softball-Millburn (S) (A) Bus 12:15

## BY GARY LAMPASONA

## JUNIOR BASEBALL CLUB



As the weather continues to warm, it's very busy at the baseball club. Player evaluations for all Small Fry C and Small Fry B players will be held at the PAL building on Saturday, March 3 beginning at 8:30 a.m. All registered children should have received a postcard with their specific time to report. If you did not receive a postcard, please come to the PAL after 8:30 a.m. and ask to see a board member. All players should come prepared with a glove and wear sneakers. Attendance is important, because these evaluations allow managers and coaches to select competitive teams, which leads to more fun for all players and parents.

**Spring Training Clinic**—Open to all registered players ages seven to 12. This is a great instructional clinic run by the South Plainfield High School coaches. It will be held at the SPHS gym and outside (weather permitting) on Saturday, March 3. Please download the registration form from our website, fill it out and bring it with the \$20 registration fee the day of the program. If you have any questions, please contact head baseball coach, Anthony Guida at (908) 812-8376.

**Player Draft**—All Small Fry League drafts are next week. The Small Fry A draft is on Tuesday, March 6; the Small Fry C draft is on Wednesday, March 7; and the Small Fry B draft will be held on Thursday, March 8. All drafts will be held in the clubhouse beginning at 7:30 p.m.

**Preseason Work Detail**—Begins on Saturday, March 10 for parents of seven and eight year old players. Your participation in work detail is vital to preparing the baseball fields for the start of the season. All parents are welcome to come and help us get the fields and complex ready. The more help we get, the better condition the fields will be for our children.

**Rutgers Certification Class**—The lone class is Tuesday, March 20 in the SPJBC clubhouse beginning at 6:30 p.m. The fee will be waived for South Plainfield residents. If you are interested in participating on the field with your child's team, a SPJBC membership card and Rutgers Certification are a must. Please contact the SPJBC at (908) 754-2090 if you are interested in becoming certified.

"Little League baseball is a very good thing because it keeps the parents off the streets." —Yogi Berra

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## MCC Wrestler Takes National Championship

Middlesex County College wrestler John McArdle won the National Championship in the 184-pound weight class on February 25. He defeated Austin Morehead from Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, Ore. at the championships held in Rochester, Minn. McArdle, who had three pins leading up to the finals, won the championship bout on a 9-8 decision. He was named an All-American.

Sam Emburgia came in seventh in the 141-pound class; Billy Bonnette finished sixth in the 157 class. They were named All-Americans.

Overall, Middlesex was ninth out of 46 schools participating and third among schools not offering wrestling scholarships.

The wrestlers qualified for the National Championship tournament by their performance in the districts two weeks ago. Nassau Community College and Gloucester County Col-



John McArdle, above top and inset, won the National Championship with a 9-8 decision.



lege also sent wrestlers to the nationals. Nassau came in fifth and Gloucester came in twelfth.

"Wrestling is very strong in this area," said Bob Wisniewski, Middlesex athletic director. "I'm very happy with their success. The program is continu-

ing to get stronger and the coaching staff is doing an excellent job." Head coach is Mike Malinconico and assistants Dan Corio and David Saraiva.

Former Middlesex and Rutgers wrestling coach John Sacchi attended both tournaments as the athletic administrator.

## Golden Tee Results

The unseasonably mild weather has many golfers bringing their clubs out of storage to play in the Golden Tee tournaments at the Plainfield West Nine. In Monday's results, Fred Kirchofer and Jay Coppola won low gross with a 35. Jeff Orth and Jim Lenox won low net with 27 and there was a tie for second place with Ralph Fech and Frank Chirichillo and Donald Hall and Jeff Orth.

On President's Day, Vinnie Welch and John Rivera won low gross with a 36. Dale Dube and Don Hall had low net with 29, and the team of Fech and Chirichillo came in second.

The next tournament is scheduled for March 5 (weather permitting) at 10 a.m. and is open to all men and women. To play, call Bill Castner, head professional, at (908) 769-3672.

## Pole Vault Powers Track Tigers to a Fantastic Season

South Plainfield High School's Winter Track Team had one of their best seasons ever.

The main focus this winter was on the team's pole vault squads. James Gerber was a repeat county champion in the winter pole vault. Jimmy also placed second in the state sectionals and earned his second trip to the State Meet of Champions. Jimmy currently owns the county track pole vault record for the winter season.

In addition, Jimmy and Jesse Deffler finished first in the county relays and second in the Group Three State Relays. Jesse and Nick Marrone placed third and fifth at the county championship then traveled to Toms River to place third and fifth at the state sectionals.

Ramsey Abdeljaber had a fantastic season in the Shot Put, winning the Howell Shot Put Meet and then placing third in the highly competitive state sectional meet. Ramsey and Danny

Bori took fourth in the county shot put relay. Danny Snogans placed sixth in the state sectional meet, qualifying for the group three championships. Danny, Jimmy, Jesse and Nick then qualified their 400 meter relay team for the group championship by running a season's best time. Overall, the boys, powered by their dominant pole vault team, finished fifth in the NJSIAA North 2 Group 3 section.

On the girls' side, Casey Butrico was a repeat state sectional champion in the Girls' Pole Vault after finishing third in the GMC Championships. Casey was followed by Kelly Walsh who placed fifth in the county and second in the state sectional meet. Casey and Kelly were second in the county relay as well.

Both the girls and boys are looking forward to a very successful spring track season. Good luck, Tigers!

-Submitted by Christopher Fish

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## Obituaries

### Renee Pasacrita, 85

Renee Pasacrita passed away on Monday morning, Feb. 27 at Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark.

Born and raised in Birkenhead, England, Renee moved to the United States in the early 1950s, residing in Rahway and Staten Island before settling in South Plainfield in 1960.



Renee Pasacrita

Renee worked as a buyer for the former Teppers Department Store in Plainfield, and later as a dental assistant for the late Dr. Bernard Struhl, DDS and now retired Dr. Anthony DiNardo, DDS, both of South Plainfield.

She was active in the community as a member of the Cherry Dell Garden Club and the South Plainfield Suburban Woman's Club. She also served as a mentor for students at Kennedy School for 10 years and, along with her husband, was a longtime communicant of Sacred Heart RC Church.

She was an avid reader, traveled all around Europe, and was devoted to her family. She will be remembered for her grace, charm, intelligence and beautiful smile.

She is predeceased by a son, David, and by a brother, John Taylor.

Surviving are her husband of 56 years, Walter; a son, Brian and wife Emely of South Plainfield; a granddaughter, Kym and husband Ted Terranova; and two great-grandsons, Logan and Jacob.

Funeral services will be held at the Criskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals.

### Lois E. (Jenkins) Colburn, 91

Lois E. (Jenkins) Colburn died on Wednesday, Feb. 22 in the Berkshire Health & Rehabilitation Center in Vinton, Va.

Born in Lisbon, Maine, Lois resided in South Plainfield for most of her life before moving to Goodview, Va. in 1992.

Employed as a nurse's aide for 22 years at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center, Lois retired in 1992. Avid in knitting and quilting, Lois belonged to many organizations where she could help those in need.

She could often be found knitting gloves, hats and baby blankets for Muhlenberg Hospital, Roanoke Community Hospital and Lewis Gayle Hospital. She was featured in *The Newark Star-Ledger* and *The Lake Shorelines* having the gift of warmth and dedicating her time knitting, quilt-

ing, rug hooking and sewing.

She is predeceased by three brothers, Raymond, Melvin and Norman Jenkins; and a sister, Phyllis Madsen.

Surviving are her husband, Robert W. Colburn, Sr.; two daughters, Joyce Skerlanitz of Piscataway and Nancy Higgins and husband David of Goodview, Va.; and a son, Robert W. Colburn, Jr. and wife Marilyn of Whitehouse. She also leaves behind six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the American Cancer Society, 2600 U.S. Highway 1, North Brunswick, N.J. 08902.

### Edward Joseph DeFillipo, 81

Edward J. DeFillipo of Plainfield passed away on Thursday, Feb. 16.

He was born, raised and educated in South Plainfield and attended Sacred Heart Church before moving to Plainfield. Recently he was a communicant of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Scotch Plains.

He served in the National Guard. He was employed by David Smith Steel Company of South Plainfield for 25 years before retiring. He was also employed by H.F. Butler Inc. of South Plainfield and the Belluscio Construction Company of Linden.

He was a private pilot who flew out of Hadley Airport, a member of the Round Valley Radio Control Club, the Stinson Club, the Academy of Model Aeronautics and the Genealogical Society of the Westfields.

He is predeceased by his parents, Peter and Concetta DeFillipo; five brothers, Louis, Anthony, Angelo, Paul and Eugene; and a sister, Virginia Bianculli.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Kathryn (Hurtack), a daughter, Denise and husband Jack Rothstein of Edison; a grandson, Jeremy Rothstein of Haddon Township; and two sisters, Barbara Bartlett of Selbyville, Del. and Jeanette Modola of Stuart, Fla.

Private funeral services were under the direction of South Plainfield Funeral Home.

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# Facts About Home Fire Safety

Fire is a deadly threat to any household. It can strike anywhere, at any time. You must be prepared by using the tools for fire protection.

Smoke alarms provide a warning of fire and are the easiest, most cost-efficient way to alert your family of a developing fire. The more smoke alarms you have installed in your home, the more your chances increase that you will be alerted to a fire.

Fire extinguishers provide a tool to fight small fires. Having a fire extinguisher in your home can increase your chances of keeping a small fire from getting out of control and becoming a deadly rage.

Using both smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in your home, along with knowing what to do in case of fire, can help save your life!

Fire can and might happen to you. Be prepared and have the knowledge to escape safely. Fire is darker, smokier, hotter and faster than you can imagine.

Since most fire fatalities occur between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. when most people are sleeping, the only thing standing between the deadly fumes of fire and a safe escape may be the piercing sound of a smoke alarm.

Fire can cause the temperature to rise several hundred degrees in just seconds. The heat is so intense that it can cause the human body to stop functioning

altogether—one breath can cause severe lung damage. The heat alone can cause someone to become unconscious and not be able to escape.

A residential home can be totally consumed in flames in less than five minutes from the start of a fire. Know what to do to help get you and your family out safely. A closed door is often the best way to stall a fire; by closing the door, you may save yourself seconds to use an alternate escape route.

Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home, and inside every bedroom and sleeping area. Fire extinguishers should be installed on each living level, as well as in rooms that pose potential fire hazards (i.e., kitchen, garage, workshop). Installing and maintaining smoke alarms and fire extinguishers dramatically increases chances of surviving a fire.

There are two basic types of smoke alarms: ionization and photoelectric. Both are effective at detecting smoke.

Replace the battery in each smoke alarm at least once a year. Never remove the battery except when replacing it with a fresh battery. Clean the smoke alarm at least once a year.

Don't ignore the sound of a smoke alarm. If the alarm is sounding, there is a reason. You and your family must be able to escape quickly and safely.

Every family should have an escape plan. Discuss and practice your escape plans. Know two exits from any room in the house.

Always feel the door to see if it is hot before opening it to escape. If the doorknob or door is hot, do not use that exit. Use your alternate exit to escape.

Crawl on the floor. Smoke from a fire rises and so does the temperature. If you crawl on the floor there will be less smoke and the heat from the fire will be less severe.

Meet at a prearranged spot outside the home. If you clearly show where everyone is supposed to meet outside the home when there is a fire, it will be easier to know who is safe.

Call the fire department from a neighbor's home. Stay on the line until the operator has all of the information needed. Never return inside the house for any reason.

The following is a fire safety checklist to lower the chances that a fire may start in your home: Keep the furnace in working order; use a fireplace screen; have proper ventilation for heaters and other small appliances; do not smoke in bed; use the correct size fuses; don't use worn out electrical wiring or run it under rugs or out windows or doors; clear refuse away—the less clutter, the less fuel a fire has to feed on.



Volunteers separate food and clothing at the Senior Center to donate to the survivors of the fire that took place last week on Clinton Avenue. (See page 5 for information on donating.)

## A Community Mourns

(Continued from page 1)

Freight donated trucks for storage. At this time, only monetary donations are being accepted. Checks should be made out to The Boyle Memorial Foundation. In the memo portion, please write: Clinton Ave. Fire Victims. Drop off or mail to the Borough of South Plainfield, 2480 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield, N.J. 07080, Attn: Clinton Avenue Fire Victims.

The Boyle Memorial Foundation is a 501(3)(C) nonprofit organization.

The Traumatic Loss Coalition of Middlesex County headed by Coordinator George Scott was in the school district after the tragedy to offer assistance to students, staff and others as needed, a service provided under the auspices of The University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey. The coalition will remain as long as they are needed.

"We do know that our borough's firefighters fought heroically to save those who were in the home," said Anesh. "Yet, despite their efforts, South Plainfield suffered a tragic loss of life unequalled in our community's history. I want to personally thank these firefighters for their efforts." He

also thanked the first responders, the police, rescue squad and emergency management personnel.

"South Plainfield is a close-knit community, and in times like these we pull together," said Anesh. "I know I speak for all our residents when I convey our heartfelt condolences to the family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them."

As of presstime, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office investigators were still working to confirm the identities of the victims whose bodies were recovered from the fire. The Middlesex County Medical Examiner's Office completed examinations of three victims on Friday, but the results were not available at presstime. Post-mortem examinations of the other two victims were also conducted on Friday.

Brown's Funeral Home in Plainfield will handle the funeral arrangements once the bodies of the deceased are released. Arrangements are yet to be announced.

According to CFO Glenn Cullen, the home has been deemed uninhabitable and is scheduled to be demolished next month.

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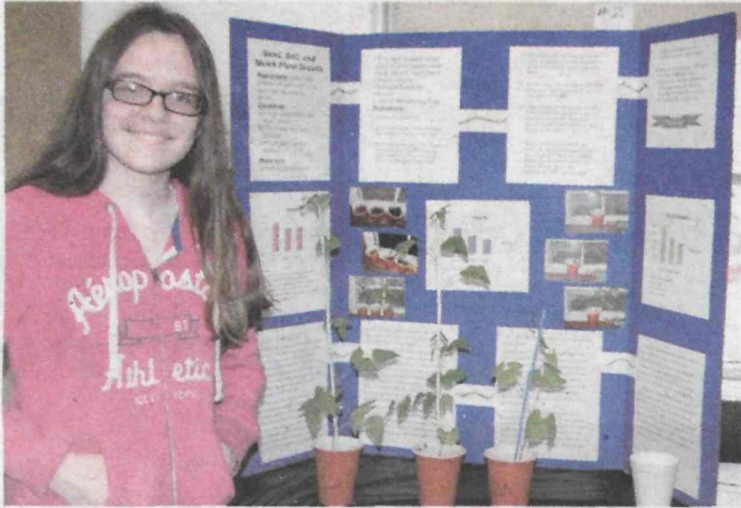
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# Students Showcase Science Experiments



Back row (L-R): Teacher Julie Zoleta, Tim Nuber, Lanae Ali, Connie Chen, Megan Forster, Anel Cortez-Ochoa, teacher Gerri Heim; front row (L-R): Jonathan Conrad, Jessica Walters, Jeremy Brown. Not pictured: Ravi Patel, Drew Spahn and teacher Jillian Tortora.



Student's Choice Recipient Megan Forster



Student's Second Choice Recipient Anel Cortez-Ochoa

By Jane Dornick

Middle School students had the opportunity to participate in the first annual Science Showcase held on February 9 and 10. Ten projects were entered; participation in the event was voluntary and open to all seventh and eighth grade students.

Science department staff members Gerri Heim, Jillian Tortora and Julie Zoleta prepared a schedule of biweekly after school meetings to guide students through the process of preparing a showcase project. All of the work, with the exception of the actual experiment, was done in the school by the students, from brainstorming ideas for topics, identifying variables and formulating hypotheses, to expressing the data on Excel as well as proper writing of the conclusion and layout of the display.

Computer teacher John Hanlon helped with Excel and art teacher Gail Merlo assisted students in arranging their display boards.

The Science Showcase projects were on display in the cafeteria and parents were able to view them during parent/teacher conferences. A short video of each young scientist explaining their investigation was also shown throughout visitation.

The projects were judged by a select group of eighth grade volunteers who have a B-average in school and a professed love of science. The student judges used a rubric to assess the topic, presentation and use of the Scientific Method.

The Student's Choice Recipient of the Science Showcase was Megan Forster, whose investigation focused on finding out which type of soil mixture was best suited for a typical house plant. She received a \$25 gift card to Barnes & Noble. Also participating in the fair were Jonathan Conrad, Jeremy Brown, Lanae Ali, Tim Nuber, Anel Cortez-Ochoa, Ravi Patel, Drew Spahn, Jessica Walters and Connie Chen.

## Parade Theme Contest Deadline Extended

How would you like the opportunity to be a part of this year's Labor Day parade? The Public Celebrations Committee is holding a contest for all South Plainfield students, grades three through six, to come up with the theme for this year's annual Labor Day parade. All you have to do is submit your ideas and the top five themes will be voted on.

Your ideas must include a description of the theme, use of examples of the theme, your name, school and grade. See your homeroom teacher for an entry form and get it back to your teacher by Friday, March 16. This deadline has been extended by one week due to the tragic fire that occurred on February 23. You will be contacted if your entry is chosen as the winner and your winning theme will be posted on the South Plainfield web page, [www.southplainfieldnj.com](http://www.southplainfieldnj.com).

## Ruby Garcia Named Junior Journalist



Junior Journalist winner Ruby Garcia with teacher Christine Dispensieri and the Cat in the Hat.

Ruby Garcia, Riley School fourth grade student, is this week's winner in the Junior Journalist program. Her story, "The Time I Learned it

the Hard Way," has earned her dinner for her family, courtesy of Hometown Heros.

The program, which encourages students to express themselves through creative writing, is a joint co-operation 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 family.

At the end of the school year in May, Hometown Heros and the *Observer* host a banquet celebrating all of the weekly winners and their families. A \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond 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 Time I Learned it the Hard Way

By Ruby Garcia

It was a warm sunny summer day. I was gazing into my clear glass window. Normally I would be riding my bike but I was grounded.

Let's back up to yesterday. I was thinking what should I do today. I wanted to ride my bike but it was too hot outside. So I went in the kitchen and got an awfully bad idea! I thought that I was so light that I could rock back and forth on the cabinet door. I rapidly jumped on the counter and onto the cabinet door. My sister told me to get down and as usual, I didn't listen. Then boom, crash, bang the cabinet fell down onto me and bounced off my back. Plates, bowls,

glass fell directly onto me. I wish I had never done that. I lay there not moving a single speck. My sister cried out "Mommy, Ruby's dead!" My mom ran to the kitchen. I had aching bruises, bloody cuts, and a throbbing black eye. I felt like I was stabbed by a million knives. I looked as if I was hit by a truck. Then I stood up, and my mom and sister were relieved to see me standing. I definitely learned my lesson. "I will never ever rock myself on a cabinet door again!"

Now let's move forward a day and we are back to me gazing out the window. Now you understand why I am grounded.

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2004	Ford	Explorer	1FMDU73E94ZB34640	Resale	\$6530.00
1994	Saturn	SL	1G8ZF599RZ159130	Resale	\$ 800.00

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