Girls take to the gridiron in powder-puff game

By THERESA STULTZ

With 2006 just around the corner, it's time to look back to the events of the past 12 months. Following are some of the highlights.

On Saturday, Nov. 24 the DECA chapter at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School hosted a powder-puff football game, an event that has become a tradition at the school. The game is designed to bring the student body together for fun and friendly competition.

Looking back on the year that was: 2007 in review

By THERESA STULTZ

One of the year's most memorable scenes was the Scotch Plains-Fanwood HS girls basketball team celebrating its county championship.

Fawson suffered a tragedy on Jan. 15, when a 26-year-old borough woman was killed after her car struck and severed a natural gas line while making a left turn at an intersection.

Chantel Mueller was traveling westbound on approximately 150th Avenue in Fawson on Dec. 19, 2006 when a random shooting occurred.

February: In Westfield, the Westfield Town Council denounced the vandalism of Nativity scenes outside two Catholic churches.

County Police Chief Daniel Vanisko

The department's lab processes about 700 cases a year, including cases from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, New York State Police and other county police departments.

"Every case, when fired from out of a gun, retains certain properties and identifiable markings that are unique to that gun. It brings the large haystack to a smaller, more manageable haystack." - Sgt. Michael Sanad

No time to waste: Young author is already published

By THERESA STULTZ

SAM VITALE

Westfield — Sam Vitale knows a thing or two about making good use of her time. This year, the 18-year-old Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School senior began penning the outlines of her first book, "The Fairy Forest," while juggling a full schedule of classes, sports and volunteer work.

"I really can't give up on writing," Vitale said. "When you have a desire like this, you don't have a lot of time. But as long as you have the desire, you can do it."

Though creative writing runs in her family — her father is a poet and her mother is a writer — Vitale didn't begin to explore her own interests until after she had graduated from high school.

"I used to hate reading until Harry Potter came along," said Vitale. "The whole world of fantasy opened up to me."

She can trace the inspiration for her writing career and her love of the medical profession to an event in her childhood.

"I was with my family at a restaurant and I wrote a poem," she said. "I was 6 years old."

Like most writers, for Vitale the love of reading depends on it. In fact, the popularity of the "Harry Potter" series inspired her to start her own project.

"I thought about how nice it would be to talk to Time and another first book," she said. "And then I thought, "What if Harry Potter were a girl?""

For Vitale, the answer was a "self-initiated story," which describes as a "self-initiated story, which she began penning the outlines of her first book, "The Fairy Forest," while juggling a full schedule of classes, sports and volunteer work.

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Sergeant Michael Sandford, two of the department’s top forensic examiners, were on hand at last week’s press conference to explain how they employ the new system on a day-to-day basis.

"Every case, when fired from out of a gun, retains certain properties and identifiable markings that are unique to that gun," said Sandford. "It is more complex to smaller, more manageable haystacks."

By sharing ballistic data and examining the 31,117 shell casings entered in the state’s database, Sandford say they can now connect the dots between seemingly unrelated crimes. The pair said they were able to make a connection between a recent shooting in Newark and a murder case in Elizabeth. Since the system was put into place last month, the department has made four hits concerning high-profile cases, according to authorities.

"The jurisdiction boundaries are limitless," said Sandford. "Criminals don’t stay in jurisdictions.

Beyond simply making an arrest, Assistant Prosecutor Bandford said the system allows for them to make more comprehensive presentations in court when their expert testimony is needed.

Union County is the first county in the state and one of few in the country with access to the automated BrassTRAX Global database. Globally, only machines of the kind are in existence. But by 2010, the system will be available to law enforcement agencies across the United States.

"The sheer speed and volume brought with the new forensic labs creates a huge backlog in caseloads," said Bandford. "We provide a service where we can process the evidence faster (and) take the burden of Union County casework from the state."

BrassTRAX carries a price tag of about $450,000, but the county police were selected to receive the equipment free of charge because of the department’s track record of working closely with the county’s forensic officers, the department’s current partnership with BrassTRAX, said Joseph Green, a spokesperson for the federal agency.

"As the database grows, the more hits can be made," said Green.

Theresa Stultz is a staff writer for the Record-Press. She can be reached at (732) 396-4204 or tstultz@publilshing.com.

Sermon to focus on interfaith relations

CRANFORD — Jan. 6 will bring a first-hand look at Epiphany from a Middle Eastern perspective to Calvary Lutheran Church, located at 108 Union St. Dr. David Grafton, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor who has dedicated his career to furthering Christian-Muslim relations, will preach at the church’s 10 a.m. worship service.

Now an associate professor for graduate studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Grafon recently returned from many years of work and study in the Middle East.

While in Cairo he served as the coordinator of graduate studies and the director of the Center for Middle East Christianity, both at the Evangelical/Protestant Theological Seminary in Cairo. He also was an adjunct lecturer in Islamic studies at the Dar Comboni Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Cairo.

He has provided lectures and seminars on Islam, Middle East religion and society, and Christian-Muslim relations in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Sudan, as well as in England and the United States. He has written numerous articles on these topics.

The public is invited to share Grafon’s insights into the very timely topics of Christian and Muslim relationships the 10 a.m. Service of Holy Communion and to meet him at a potluck brunch following worship.

Advance registration is not necessary but people are asked to bring brunch-type food items to share.

All will be the worship service, Jan. 6 and no Sunday School class that day. For further information about the Epiphany festivities or about the church, call (732) 276-2418.

Calvary Lutheran Church is a congregation of the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), serving the Cranford-Westfield area and surrounding communities for 79 years.

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Newcomers’ Club hosted its annual Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 8. Members and their families enjoyed pictures with Santa, a delicious breakfast and creative holiday crafts. At the buffet line members also entered new toys to the Center for Hope Hospice and Palliative Care. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Newcomers’ Club, a nonprofit social organization, offers parties and evening activities for women, their spouses and children. For more information about the club, visit the Web site at http://scotchplazaphone.com/newcomers.

Author

(Continued from page A-1)

Winston to discuss writing, publishing

WESTFIELD — A little girl who turned to become an award-winning author, Winston was 12, she wanted to become an astronaut. But getting her story published brought the large haystack of manuscripts with queries, rejections, query letters, book proposals, the never-ending submission process and how to best write a query letter.

She is also a regular writer for the Record-Press, where she discusses topics such as rejections, query letters, book proposals, the never-ending submission process and how to best write a query letter. She has written numerous articles on these topics.

She can be reached at (732) 396-4204, tstultz@publilshing.com.
A holiday meal on every table

BOE calendar is introduced

WESTFIELD — The Board of Education approved the draft of the 2008-2009 school year BOE calendar at its Nov. 28 meeting and set the tentative date of Dec. 11. The calendar can be found at westfield-
nj.k12.nj.us/calendar.

This year’s tentative schedule includes a starting date of Wednesday, Sept. 3, with school ending in a four-hour session on Monday, April 28 (also the date for graduation).

The holiday break would run Dec. 24-Jan. 7. The proposed spring break would be March 22-26.

Since there is a presidential election on Nov. 6 it is proposed that K-5 schools begin six weeks before the election, with parent conferences scheduled during the other weeks. Nov. 3 would also be scheduled for half-day conferences, and Nov. 5 would be a four-hour session for curricular planning for K-5 teachers.

The Academic Convention is scheduled for Nov. 6-7.

The tentative calendar includes the following:

- Sept. 3: First day of school
- Dec. 24-26: Winter break
- March 22-26: Spring break
- April 28: Last day of school
- May 29: Memorial Day
- June 29: Last day of school

Registration is open for winter classes at arts workshop

WESTFIELD — The New Jersey Winter Workshop for the Arts, located at 352-360 East Broad St., is now registering for its winter program schedule of classes. The Music Studio, which offers private lessons, small and large group classes, and ensembles begins on Monday, Dec. 17. Beginning to advanced level students may enroll for 30, 45- or 60-minute classes in strings, guitar, woodwinds, brass, percussion, piano or voice. Open daily, the Music Studio offers a program of time that is convenient to both the students and the teachers, who are a highly qualified staff of professional music educators.

Group lessons are also offered in various ensembles, which helps children to learn piano fundamentals, sight reading, and repertoire. Rolf Schnake, the Music Director, said, "The creative atmosphere on our studio is a great place where kids can make and express themselves where they can learn to understand music."

The Music Studio, which has been training music students of all ages since 1975, has recently purchased three built-in snow days.

Contact Us: The 24-hour telephone help line is staffed by trained counselors 365 days a year. The number is (908) 233-7355.

Hotline offers help during the holidays

WESTFIELD — If gathering with family at Thanksgiving leads you down a road of self-doubt, then you make yourself anxious and depressed, help is only a phone call away.

Contact Us: The 24-hour telephone help line is staffed by trained counselors 365 days a year. The number is (908) 233-7355.

"Thirst is the number one concern, especially for people who have an addiction," said David Owen, executive director of Concerns of the Homeless. "People have high expectations for holidays because they have a season of especially stressful or difficult holidays. For many people, talking, especially to a nonjudgmental, active listener, can be truly healing." Concerns of the Homeless, which has been helping the homeless and people suffering from addiction since 1979. Highly-trained volunteers staff the hotline from 3 p.m. to 12 a.m. five days a week, and from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. weekends.

"Some of the callers are just not ready to listen and reflect on their situation," the judge said. "We have to be there for them and say, you can listen."

Contact Us: The 24-hour telephone help line is staffed by trained counselors 365 days a year. The number is (908) 233-7355.

Library starts fiction club

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Public Library has begun a fiction book club to discuss new and classic books. Meetings take place every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. In the past, the library has held book clubs for different genres and specific topics, such as science fiction, political or environment. The book club will continue at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 11 and will feature "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The 1922 Battle Ave. location of the library has been open since 1917.

For information and to register, call 908-322-3000 ext. 204 or email library@scotchplains.org. All programs at the library are free and open to all interested participants.

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For more information, call (732) 369-8830 or visit pets at www.westfieldnj.com.
The kids are alright

The following guest commentary was written by Stephen Washington, national chairman and chief executive officer of the New Jersey chapter of CASA.

Millions of American teens ringing in the New Year as responsible, confident, successful, and contributing members of our society is a trend that should continue to grow, according to research from RAND.

New Year's resolutions that I might actually achieve

New Year’s resolutions are a positive way to set goals and revise your life in the coming year. The coming up short. The task requires taking a hard look at what the family can do together and include him/her in all aspects.

According to information gathered from The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, states that, compared to teenagers, two working parents are three and a half times more likely to have abused prescription drugs, three times more likely to have used illegal drugs than teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week). Additionally, an online survey of 1,250 adults and teenagers in line with those of teenagers themselves. After that include attractions such as amusement parks or museums.

California, we recommend that millions of young people are engaging in disaster relief, registering new voters, educating their communities. But it is

Indeed, adolescents seem to be less self-absorbed and more oriented-than-they-are-given-credit-for.

During the “surf-and-turf” transitional years of adolescence, the teen needs the guidance of the family to help them through this time. As a matter of fact, these are the years to make sure they have enough to keep them busy, to help keep them off the streets.

For many, family time seems more an ideal than a reality. This is the time to offer guidance and to provide a support system for the teens to build upon. This is the time to help them make the right decisions. This is the time to be involved.

In his new book, The Good Ten, Tufts University Professor Richard M. Lerner also offers rebuttal to definitions of this developmental stage that necessarily link it to conflict with parents, mood disruptions and risky behavior.

Lerner also references the work of Adam’s teachers from New Beginnings in Fairlndle were there to cheer him on. His parents, Cindi and Greg Goldstein, prepared Adam for this rite by taking him to Friday night service, to overview the customs, and to teach him about the ancient meaning of the mitzvah. It was a very exciting and memorable bar mitzvah for the family, congregants and many friends.

Letters to the Editor

I never tell my son he can't dance. I never think he doesn't have a chance. I never think he can't dance. I never tell my son he can't dance. I never tell my son he can't dance.

I think this poem, by an unknown author, speaks to the day.

New Year’s resolutions that I might actually achieve

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SP. Police Dept. in line for $75K in federal funds

Manny will help pay for renovation of communication center

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives last week gave final congressional approval to a $2,300,000 appropriations bill that includes $75,000 for the Scotch Plains Police Department, Rep. Mike Ferguson (R-Westfield) announced.

The Scotch Plains Police Department funding is included in a $555 billion appropriations bill that funds all government agencies and other agencies. The House approved it 272-142. Ferguson voted for the bill, and President Bush has said he will sign the legislation.

Ferguson, who requested the initial funds earlier this year, and the federal funding will help the department with its ongoing renovation of its communications center, including operating radio, the navigation and dispatch system, mobile computing, and reporting and surveillance capabilities.

Dr. Mahmoud to spin ‘Tales of the Arabian Nights’

Society’s luncheon scheduled for Jan. 2

WESTFIELD — Hassen (Has) Mahmoud will conduct a lecture with an interesting topic on “Tales of the Arabian Nights” on Monday, December 3.

The “Tales of the Arabian Nights” is one of the most well-known stories that has been written in Arabic. These stories were written by various authors.

Dr. Mahmoud, who serves as the Historian at the Historical Society of Westfield, will tell us about some of the stories in this book.

The event will be held at the Historical Society at 2:00 p.m. on December 3.

Nancy Jo Eagan

Nancy Jo Eagan, 44, died Dec. 22, 2007, at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at New Brunswick. Born in Summit, Mrs. Eagan resided in Garwood her entire life. She was the daughter of the late Margaret and Edward Eagan, Sr., and his wife, Dr. Carla Eagan; a daughter, Kimberly Braden, and her husband, Bob; two sisters, Margie Gonzales and Mary Zolin; and several nieces and nephews.

During this season we at Gray’s would like to extend the warmest wishes for Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Sincerely

Wishes from the families of Bill, Dale & Chuck

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Nancy Jo Eagan

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Cheesy fun on tap at the library

SCOTCH PLAINS— Joe’s in Westfield will speak about the cheese-making regimes of France, offer tastings of a variety of cheeses, and discuss beer, wine, and innovative food and beverage pairings. 


Admission is free, but registration is required as space is limited. Register by calling the library at (908) 722-5007, ext. 204 or email to library@scotch-plains.org.

This Thursday, the library will host an open house for its community room. All programs at the library are free and open to all interested participants. The Scotch Plains Library is located at 1927 Bartle Ave.

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LOOKING BACK ON THE YEAR THAT WAS: 2007 IN REVIEW

(Continued from page A-1)

Enforcement event known as the "Good Ole Enforce," representing his attendance at a law enforcement event known as "Good Ole Enforce." Neal LeStrange filed a lawsuit against most of the town's attorneys. Wisniewski, who has repeatedly objected to extending pension benefits and pay raises for workers, is charged with befriending and then defrauding an elderly couple. Brian Bartiromo, 33, agreed to resign from public office in New Jersey after he pleaded guilty to charges. Brian Bartiromo had been accused of offensive conduct that occurred in 2004 and 2005.

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In Scotch Plains, hundreds of residents joined an athletic turf field at the Southside Park. The project was approved to start by the township's plan for fiscal year 2008.

November: Republicans collide with the local Democratic line for aid increases of 20 percent, but not all without incident. Kevin Glover abstained, instead supporting the township's plan for pay raises.

December: Westfield High School Senior Kevin Glover died an unexpected death after a heart attack. Glover was scheduled to play in the annual football game.

Emergency workers still fight the debris after a fire killed a man at the Station Mews construction site. Three people were trapped inside, including one who later died. The fireman was killed as it was too hot to breathe. The hero of the tale was a firefighter who quietly recovered. The apartment was fully involved in the fire. The cause of the collapse was not immediately known.

Also in Fanwood, borough police officer Mark Ciarrocca and Jim Parenti addressed most concerns by year's end. Councilman Ron Parenti addressed most concerns by year's end. Councilman Ron Parenti addressed most concerns by year's end.

In August, the Recreation Commission selected a design for wide-ranging renovations to the Memorial Middle School. The project involves a makeover of the 40-year-old New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. The governor hopes to push the bill through the legislature. The governor plans to unveil a $325,000 in state aid. The city of Scotch Plains is under pressure to meet the deadline for its fiscal year 2008.

The council hopes to negotiate a settlement with the developer. A redevelopment agreement was approved by the Fanwood Village Investors, LLC for a new residential project. The new residential project is undergoing environmental impact studies. The council hopes to negotiate a settlement with the developer. A redevelopment agreement was approved by the Fanwood Village Investors, LLC for a new residential project. The new residential project is undergoing environmental impact studies.

In Scotch Plains, the township council approved a budget for the fiscal year 2008. The budget includes a 6 percent increase in the property tax. The tax increase is relatively small by area standards, but the township council is concerned about its effect on property values.

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Madrigal Singers present holiday show

The Madrigal Singers, directed by Sister Felicia, will kick off their 38th Season with "Lord Love and Peace, and Joy!" at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 16 at the United Methodist Church, 1 Church St. in Westfield. Guest soloist Jonny Cazen and Lorna Keresy will also join the Madrigals. The concert is free, but donations are appreciated. A reception will follow.

Throwing a party... Having a meeting...

Throwing a party... Having a meeting...

NJDTE seeks youth dancers

New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble will hold company auditions on Jan. 13 in the dance studio at The Academy at Central Arts in Clark. Auditions will be held from 2-4 p.m. for female dancers, 5-7 p.m. for men. For further information, call 908-232-7200.

CDC schedules auditions for "Oklahoma!"

The wind has come around and opened the plaza's doors to music, and live auditions for the CDC's Theatre spring production of "Oklahoma!" will be held. Open auditions will be held at the theater, 78 W. 8th Ave., at 1 p.m., Jan. 12 and 13 and 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 15.

The show, which opens in May, will be directed by Broadway veteran Justin Pounds. The CDC Theatre is seeking the roles of Jud Fry, Curly, Will Parker, and a multi-generational cast. Strong singers who can move well and strong dancers who can sing will be considered for all parts.

All parts are open and have not been pre-cast.

Prospective cast members should prepare 16 bars of an up-tempo piece and a ballad in the style of Rogers and Hammerstein. Bring sheet music in the key of the piece, no lead sheets. Prepare to move. Production dates include Feb. 5, 9 and 10; Saturday, March 5 and 7; and Sunday, May 15 and May 16. Admission by donation to the door. For further information, call (908) 232-1570.

A breakdown of the cast is as follows:

Curly - A proud and handsomer kind of man who loves Laurey. Role: 20-30. Voice: baritone (C5 to E5).
Judy Parrish - The matriarch of the community. Supporting role. Age: 65+ Voice: mezzo (C3 to F5).
Ella - A cowman who is a hired hand in the community. Role: 20-30. Voice: mezzo (C3 to D4).
Will Parker - A happy farmer who is in love with Ada. Role: 20-30. Voice: baritone (D2 to E2).
SP-FHS girls basketball falls to Hun at home, 51-36

SP-F senior co-captain Emily Meehan looks for an open teammate during the R-31 home setback last Thursday.

JIMMOC@COMCAST.NET

Coach Scott Plaine-Fanwood High School's varsity girls basketball head coach, has been coaxed by SP-F athletic director Mary Ruszala to return for another season, the Blue Devils' top rival for state supremacy. A lifetime achievement for Mount Saint Mary's (MSM), while Kuska is a superb butterfly (59.33) and the Individual Medley (2:12.33),

Ridgewood and Sullivan has been a very dependable collective height began to take over during the third quarter on a 9-4 run, eventually outscoring the • SP-F to some transition baskets.

Despite numerous graduation losses, Smith has

New coach, same goals for Wi girls swimming

Youthful Brooke Smith, who takes over as Westfield High School's varsity girls swimming head coach, has

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In New Brunswick, NJ

COMING UP

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Sports

December 28, 2007

COMING UP

WGW's annual basketball team is scheduled to face off Thursday night (7 p.m., @ Scotch Plains-Fanwood). In the morning (10 a.m., @ Scotch Plains-Fanwood).

Sports

Section C

SP-FHS girls basketball falls to Hun at home, 51-36

Raiders hold early lead but Hun turns volume up late

By JOE MERCER

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's varsity girls basketball team did almost everything it needed to do in order to make the trip to the state playoffs. But the Raiders' season ended on Thursday night, just one day after the Blue Devils earned their fourth win in a row. In the morning (10 a.m., @ Scotch Plains-Fanwood).

SP-F senior co-captain Emily Meehan was on deck for the fourth quarter and the Raiders had trouble on the boards and in the paint.

"They really made use of their height advantage during the second half, getting into the paint and to the lane," Davis said. "That, coupled with the fact that they are a good team overall that is well coached, helped them take over.

With the win, Hun improved to 7-1 overall this sea-

son while the Raiders fell to 2-3.

SP-F was scheduled to return to action while this issue was going to press in the Marist Lady Knights Christmas Tournament. Dec. 28-30.

"It is going to be a tough road," Davis said of the tournament. "We have the host team, Marist, in our first game, which is going to be a tough one, and we also have many other good teams entered in as well.

"But no matter what happens we know that we are a good team and that it is still early on in the season and there is always room to improve."

Following the tournament the Raiders are scheduled to host Plainfield at 1 p.m. on Jan. 5 at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. For more on the Raiders' 2007-08 season schedule, visit www.highschoolsports.net.

Joe Serzan is the sports editor for the Record-Press and the Cranbrook Chronicle. He can be reached at (732) 396-4202 and jserzan@coastal.com.

OUTLOOK

SP-F senior co-captain Emily Meehan looks for an open teammate during the R-31 home setback last Thursday.
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