

Record-Press

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INSIDE



Off to a slow start

Hillary Klimowicz and the rest of her Raiders basketball teammates lost the first two games of the season before facing Linden Tuesday. They look to get back on track with a West Coast road trip after Christmas. See Sports, Page C-1.



A makeover for a Victorian beauty

An ongoing restoration of a Victorian home in Fanwood recently drew the attention of a camera crew from the History Channel. See the story on Page B-1.



Scouts growing green thumbs

The members of Boy Scout Troop 72 in Westfield are at work on several projects to earn their merit badges in horticulture. See the story on Page B-1.

REMINDER

Pizza and a movie at the library

The Teen Group of the Fanwood Library will gather for its "Pizza and a Movie" program 2 p.m. Tuesday. The movie screened will be "A Christmas Story." The program is open to all local teens; for information, call (908) 322-6400.

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Residents rally to oppose Cooper Rd. project



BROOKS CRANDALL/CORRESPONDENT
Organizer Don Cardiff speaks to a neighbor at Saturday's rally as children work on a sign with an anti-development message in the background.

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD-PRESS

SCOTCH PLAINS — Buttressed by 50 or more sympathetic neighbors, opponents of a south side building plan gathered on an island in the middle of Cooper Road Saturday to draw attention to their cause.

At the rally, neighbors discussed the history of Cooper Road and brainstormed legal strategies for controlling new development while their children sat cross-legged in the grass, inking slogans onto handmade cardboard signs.

"We want to preserve this town, and stop this inappropriate building," said one Cooper Road woman who asked not to be identified.

The rally was prompted by a developer's plan to construct a single-family home on a privately owned lot that occupies the western end of the island. The plan requires a variance from the Board of Adjustment, which will hear the case Jan. 6. The building lot is 660 square feet shy of the 40,000 square foot minimum established by the local land use ordinance.

Neighbors lament the steadily increasing level of traffic on a street that was once a farm road, and was chosen by many for its pastoral setting, quiet, and abundance of wildlife. Construction of a house on the wooded tract of land, they said, would send a green light to developers interested in carving up the dwindling open spaces that remain in the township.

Resident Ed Davis said the island is symbolic of the uniqueness of his neighborhood.

"The house is going to sit in the middle of an open area, and it's going to dominate the view coming up here," Davis said. "It just seems crass."

With much of northern New Jersey slated to be off-limits to development under new state regulations, many builders are turning their attention to communities like Scotch Plains, which has an abundance of large lots and open space on the south side. For example, the Planning Board is in the final stages of reviewing a seven-lot subdivision off

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Towns get state funds to improve roadways

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD-PRESS

Area communities have received municipal aid grants totaling more than \$500,000 from the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the state agency announced last week.

The awards were part of \$67.5 million in aid granted to more than 400 municipalities. The funding is distributed using a formula based on town population and road mileage. Seventy-five percent of the grant money is provided up front, and 25 percent is distributed after the project is completed.

In Westfield, the DOT awarded \$160,000 for work on Highland Avenue; Scotch Plains received \$160,000 for improvements on Rahway Road; and Fanwood received \$180,000 for work on Pleasant Avenue.

The municipalities will upgrade the roads in 2005, likely during the summer months.

Each spring, municipalities apply for funding through the NJDOT Local Aid Division. Applications cover a variety of project types including road resurfacing, rehabilitation, or reconstruction and signalization.

Municipal governments maintain more than 70 percent of New Jersey's 36,000 miles of roads. In many instances, local property taxes do not provide sufficient funds for proper repair and maintenance to these roadways.

"Improvement of our road networks and bridges is essential to improving economic growth and the quality of life for New Jersey residents," said Assembly Speaker Albio Sires (D-33).

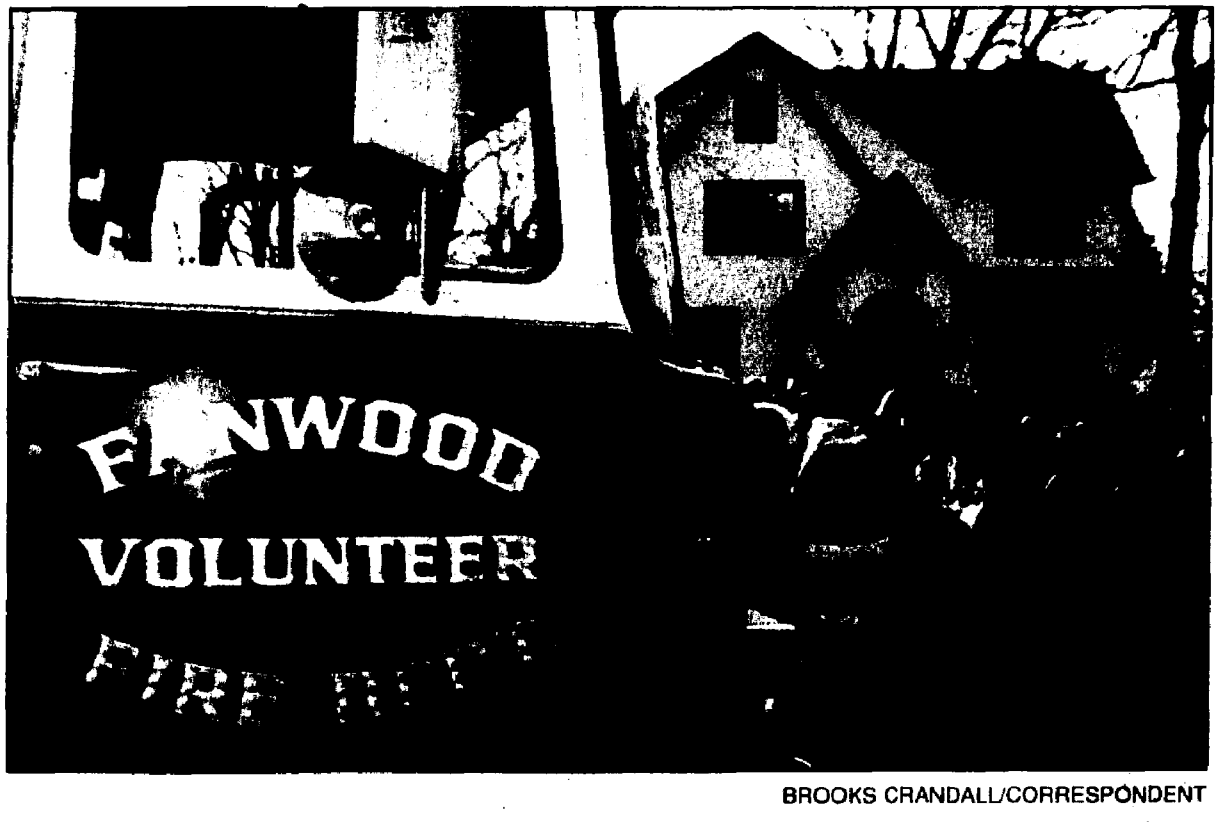
NJDOT's Municipal Aid program is very popular and competitive. Of the 829 grant applications received, the NJDOT funded 408, or 49 percent. Many towns that receive awards do not get the full amount requested.

Funding for the program is also limited, as NJDOT received more than \$198 million in requests.



Special deliveries from Santa Claus

St. Nicholas came to Fanwood Saturday for the borough's annual "Santa Parade," in which the jolly old man rides around town, courtesy of the fire department, delivering gifts to local kids. Top, Santa hands out a doll to one lucky girl as other children wait their turn. At left, he made his rounds using not a sleigh and reindeer but perched on the front of a fire truck. Below, Hunter Drive was abuzz about Santa's arrival. The neighborhood has an annual party to celebrate his visit.



BROOKS CRANDALL/CORRESPONDENT

At WHS, freshmen get help from above

Juniors, seniors work to smooth transition

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD-PRESS

WESTFIELD — In a school with a burgeoning population that is steadily approaching 2,000 students, Westfield High School upperclassmen are playing a role in acclimating their younger classmates to life inside crowded hallways.

A program designed by a committee of parents, students, and staff aims to ease the ninth grade transition process by enlisting student mentors to provide advice and counsel to incoming freshmen.

School officials have long been concerned about the experience of integrating students into a large and sometimes confusing high school, said Student Assistance Counselor Maureen Mazzaresse.

In a new program created to address that concern, during gym classes on selected weeks, the 460-odd members of the freshman class are broken down into 38 smaller groups, which are supervised by 108 student volunteers. Nine guidance counselors and five teacher advisors keep watch from a distance.

At the group sessions, student mentors lead their groups through a structured exercise, moderating a discussion when the lesson is finished. Topics range from new and old friendships and respecting differences to making sound choices and understanding consequences.

"Most of them have the same concerns — they're scared about their teachers or worried about finals," said senior Lindsay DeGiralamo. "Our goal is to break their fears down one at a time and by the end of the program, hopefully you've given them some help."

Mazzaresse said the transition leaders were selected from a pool of 400 students who wanted to participate. Once selected, the student mentors complete a 15-hour training program and attend monthly training sessions. The student leaders are pulled from electives to administer the transition program.

(Continued on page A-2)

County prods towns to consider shuttle bus to train stations

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD-PRESS

WESTFIELD — Union County officials hosted an informational session last week as part of their efforts to promote municipal shuttle-bus service along the Raritan Valley railroad line.

The goal of the Community Shuttle Efficiency Project, which is focusing on communities throughout central Union County, is to provide local officials with financial models and to plan routes and schedules for potential operation.

The program was funded by a federal grant through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. Officials hope to boost ridership on the train line, and provide the "missing link" of

public access to the workplace, said Walter Cherwin, who coordinated the meeting.

Of the seven communities involved in a technical study, he said, only Roselle Park currently offers a jitney service. NJ Transit is willing to provide seed money for bus service in each Raritan Valley community, though the contribution would last for only three years and would not consist of full funding even in that time period, Cherwin said.

He added that the service would ideally operate during morning and evening peak hours to serve commuters. Markets will also be examined to explore off-peak and weekend hours, Cherwin explained.

"What we see coming out of the study is information for decision-makers," said Cherwin. "...There are some regional

opportunities for synergy here."

According to 2003 statistics compiled by NJ Transit, more than 82 percent of area residents commute to work by car, while fewer than 8 percent commute by rail. In Westfield, Scotch Plains, and Fanwood, between 8 and 12 percent commute to their jobs on the train. Officials want to enlarge that percentage, and some believe a shuttle service can do it.

The great obstacle to a jitney service is, of course, financial. Each bus costs an estimated \$90,000, and operating and maintenance costs push annual expenses well into six figures per year for a single community. NJ Transit does offer three years of financial support for the buses — \$30,000 for the first year, \$20,000 for the second, and \$10,000 for the third year.

In 2003, the Westfield station saw an average of 1,800 commuters board the train each weekday, more than double the number of commuters at any other station along the Raritan Valley line. And given that the town won't be adding parking capacity, officials will be exploring opportunities to reduce the amount of cars on local roadways, said Rafael Betancourt, chairman of the Parking, Transportation, and Public Safety Committee.

"We'll have probably dozens of Planning Board applications that are going to require additional parking," Betancourt said. "So we'll consider anything that was discussed in the past and left on the back burner."

(Continued on page A-2)

Residents rally to oppose project

(Continued from page A-1)

Cushing Road.

For resident Rob Rykowski, who moved to Scotch Plains from a once-bucolic setting on Staten Island, the development pressures he's fighting now remind him of his former home.

"I don't want to see the same thing happen here," he said.

The rally was organized by resident Don Cardiff, who has mounted signs throughout the township and set up a website for his cause. According to Josh Bernstein, who lives on Cooper Road, the site received 50 hits on its first day and has now been viewed 4,000 times.

"The website is just an organizational tool — the point of the site is to get people on the list and get people aware of what's going on down here," Bernstein said.

Cooper Road residents plan to hire a land use attorney and a planner to make the case that construction on the lot would create a safety hazard as well as threaten the area's rustic setting.

One of Cardiff's goals in holding the rally, in fact, was to generate revenue to pay for a legal defense at the next month's public hearing. At an information table, a volunteer proudly displayed a handful

of checks obtained from neighbors at the gathering and pointed to a legal pad that includes pages of names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

"There are more than 100 people against this," she said.

Last week, several Cooper Road residents asked the Township Council to purchase the lot from owner AT&T. The eastern half of the island is municipally owned, and was designated as a conservation zone by the council earlier this month.

At the Dec. 14 meeting, Mayor Martin Marks and Councilman Frank Rossi said the council couldn't purchase the privately-owned lot because any official action could threaten the legal authority of the zoning board. But they encouraged residents to attend the Jan. 6 meeting and make their views known.

Like most of his neighbors, Rykowski said he would attend the meeting, both to preserve his neighborhood and his way of life.

"Most of us moved out here because we don't want to live in Manhattan," he said.

The Jan. 6 meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the municipal building and will open to the public. To visit the Cooper Road residents' website, go to www.cooperroad.org.

WHS freshmen get help from above

(Continued from page A-1)

This year's program, which will conclude in January, is an expansion of a pilot program school officials introduced last year. After a successful introduction, officials broadened the program and worked at making the curriculum consistent.

Besides giving their classmates the raw information they need to navigate the daily grind at a large high school, the juniors and seniors can give advice and empathize about subjects their teachers wouldn't think to address.

"It's comforting for them to know that they're not the only ones going through changes...this happens to everyone and we're all doing this together," DeGiralomo said.

"We're not these people to be afraid of, and they can relate to us better than they think," said senior Erin McCloskey.

To discourage freshmen from forming cliques during the sessions, the transition leaders randomly assign them to subgroups to work on tasks. Especially when they first arrive at the high school, ninth grade students are likely to organize into protective cliques, said senior Tiffany Frasier.

"You can see the cliques forming based on who's sitting together," she said.

During a transition session last week, a group of three mentors passed around puzzle-piece cutouts on which were written scenarios about stress, a timely topic for the group given looming midterm examinations.

In a conference room, a group of 10 students arranged themselves into a circle. Amid chatter about an excessively demanding math teacher, students brainstormed ideas for solutions to the problems, which explored the paradoxes of time manage-

ment, meeting schedules, and finding down time to relax.

"Find a stress ball," joked one curly-haired freshman.

"You may think, 'Studying a lot at once really works for me,'" said senior Kaidy Jarmas, a group leader. "As you go further on in the school, there will be more and more information for tests, and you'll have to study incrementally."

Down the hall, an 11-member group settled into an informal conversation about the pressure to receive top grades.

"If I get a 90 on a test, I'm a lot less upset than if I got a 99 and made a stupid mistake," explained one freshman.

"My mom is deranged," said another, to appreciative laughter. He said he was already feeling the pressure to prepare his resume for an Ivy League college application.

"Not everybody is going to be Harvard material — and not everybody wants to be," said his mentor, a senior.

As the bell rang and the session came to a close, Mazzarese reappeared to collect the materials, armed with a folder and a warm smile. Ninety-six percent of freshmen are giving the transition program high marks, she said.

"Last year one of the things students said over and over was that they wanted more student contact," she said. "That's what really prompted all this. They get a chance to sit down in a room with other kids and just talk."

Shuttle bus

(Continued from page A-1)

Scotch Plains and Fanwood spent more than a year exploring the possibility of a joint jitney service, but both communities abandoned the idea when it became apparent the service would require taxpayer contribution. Even after factoring in revenue from ad sales, user fees, and grants, officials said the service would lose between \$17,000 and \$40,000 per year.

Westfield might be willing to collaborate with its neighbors on such a service, Betancourt said. But he noted the town wasn't involved with the now-defunct Scotch Plains-Fanwood project, and added he wasn't aware of ongoing efforts to establish a service in Westfield.

According to Scotch Plains Deputy Mayor Paulette Coronato, who attended Friday's meeting, having the county serve as a facilitator will improve the likelihood of communities pursuing a jitney service.

"Maybe it will help open doors we weren't able to get to in our last process," she said.

"We are looking to join other communities that might be a better scenario than just working with Fanwood," Coronato added, "but we need to find a way to do it with an efficient financial model."

Any potential shuttle service would have to be self-supporting, Coronato said.

"A lot would depend on people saying 'I'm tired of being on the waiting list,'" Betancourt said of a Westfield document that includes the names of 400 to 500 residents signed up for future commuter parking permits. "The idea is a great one, but there has to be a groundswell of support for it from residents."

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Legislators meet with school officials to discuss reform of controversial law

WESTFIELD — School superintendents William Foley of Westfield and Carol Choye of Scotch Plains-Fanwood called for review and reform of S-1701 in a recent meeting with State Senator Thomas Kean Jr. and Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, who represent the 21st legislative district.

Held in the Westfield Board of Education offices Dec. 14 and attended by the superintendents, legislators, Board of Education members, administrators and PTO representatives from both school districts, the meeting served as means for communication regarding Senate bill S-1701, which was approved last summer. The bill imposes new restrictions on school district budget and financial practices and has produced an angry response from school districts around the state.

"Capping expenditures does not control expenditures," Foley said in a statement following the meeting. "For example, special education costs are mandated by the state. Westfield pays \$14 million in special education costs and receives \$4 million from the state."

Choye, whose school district faces a similar situation, added, "And this does not include the extra expense of transportation, aides or child study team time."

"Last year Westfield's special education costs increased by 9 1/2 percent, this year we had close to a 20 percent increase in insurance costs, and in the last two years we experienced a 100 percent increase in utilities expenses," said Foley. "If

the Legislature caps our budget increases to three percent, we are going to have to cut programs."

According to Foley, if Westfield had been limited to a 3 percent budget cap last year, the district would have faced \$1.9 million in program cuts. Westfield's budget increased by 6 percent last year to cover spending for special education, insurance and utility increases; add six teachers and four coaches; upgrade computer technology; and implement new or revised curricula with accompanying textbooks.

Kean, who voted for the bill and has since defended it, suggested that if the state mandates a 3 percent cap for school districts, then the state's budget should follow the same restriction. He noted that the state increased its budget by 17 percent this year.

A more realistic approach to addressing school budgets, he now says, would be for the legislature to further review and amend S1701. The legislature will be present on Jan. 11 for the State of the State address, but actually doesn't convene in voting sessions until February, too late to affect the school budget planning process for 2005-06.

Kean and Bramnick said they would make an effort to convince the legislature to convene on Jan. 11 to review S-1701 and consider recommendations by Foley, Choye and the Garden State Coalition of Schools.

Kean stated that he originally supported the bill because "the



A new state law that imposes additional restriction on education budgets has produced an angry response from school boards, but local education officials and state legislators were all smiles at a recent meeting to discuss the issue. Included were, from left, Debora Brody, PTA Council President from Scotch Plains-Fanwood; Carol Choye, Scotch Plains-Fanwood superintendent; William Foley, Westfield superintendent; Senator Thomas Kean Jr.; Assemblyman Jon Bramnick; and Westfield Board of Education President Anne Riegel.

intent of controlling costs while maintaining high quality education in the state is a meritorious goal." At the same time, he acknowledged there was little legislative review of the bill and said he now supports amending it. Bramnick, who did not vote in favor of the measure, said that the Assembly had the advantage of additional time for review after the bill was passed down from the Senate.

Foley recommended other approaches to limiting school district costs including more special education aid, incentives for school districts that stay within the state budget cap, and more cost savings options in the state health benefits program.

Currently, S-1701 requires all school districts to reduce their fund balance, or surplus, to 3 percent. The superintendents said the Legislature should call for the amendment of S-1701 to allow school districts to carry a 3 percent fund balance with an additional 3 percent dedicated to a capital reserve. Choye and Foley also recommended that the administrative

spending limits now restricted in S-1701 should include a cost of living adjustment with a provision for enrollment growth.

Margaret Ames, Legislative Committee Chairwoman for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, noted that according to the most recent state Department of Education statistics, the number of administrators employed by New Jersey public schools has decreased over the last 15 years, while the numbers of public school students and teachers have increased by 28 percent and 30 percent, respectively, during the same period.

Westfield school board President Anne Riegel noted that Westfield's administrative costs have traditionally been below the state average. "Our administrators work very hard developing programs and working with teachers toward the success and well-being of our students," she said. She closed the meeting by thanking the legislators, superintendents, board members, and PTO representatives for sharing their ideas for reform.

Sprint interested in Fanwood cell tower

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD PRESS

FANWOOD — Borough officials may have to contend with the divisive problem of cell towers once again, as a service provider has expressed interest in constructing a tower on municipally-owned property.

According to Councilman Jack Molenaar, Sprint has asked for permission to examine the feasibility of constructing a tower at the Recycling Center, which is located at the corner of North Avenue and Westfield Road.

The company has yet to craft a site plan or propose a physical design or height for a proposed tower. But any proposed tower could become a hot-button issue in a borough that is already littered with cell antennas and has gone to court to prevent Verizon antennas from being installed atop a PSG&G tower at North and Elm avenues.

"This is a sensitive issue," Molenaar said. "On the plus side, there is positive revenue... but the downside is (the possibility) of another tower in Fanwood," he explained. "The more public input we get over this, the better."

Fanwood residents have opposed cell towers, arguing that they are unsightly and negatively impact property values.

Crews are putting the finishing touches on a 120-foot tall latticed tower at Borough Hall. There are two available spaces for cell antennas on the tower, and some borough officials have been hoping service

providers would elect to mount cell antennas there.

Molenaar said he didn't know whether the borough could require a cell phone company to relocate its antennas at Borough Hall if a service gap is evident at a targeted location. The company will make its pitch to the Borough Council at an agenda meeting sometime in January or February, he said.

Currently, three cell antennas are mounted on an existing PSE&G tower in the borough, and AT&T is installing antennas on a tower off LaGrande Avenue. If courts overturn the council's 2003 decision to reject the Verizon application, there will be separate cell antennas installed in a municipality that encompasses just about one square mile.

At a Planning Board meeting last week, Chairman Greg Cummings announced his distaste for cell towers in no uncertain terms.

"At point does Fanwood say enough is enough?" Cummings said. "...I suggest the mayor and council immediately change what the previous administration said about allowing towers on borough property — it's an invitation for trouble," he explained, referring to borough policies that encourage service providers to install towers in designated sections of town.

Cummings added that a potential \$25,000 annual lease from a cell phone service provider is not enough revenue to warrant disrupting the charm of a residential neighborhood.

Planning Board approves First St. subdivision

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD PRESS

FANWOOD — The Planning Board granted a developer approval to subdivide an oversized lot on First Street at a meeting last week.

The application to divide one lot into two new building lots was approved by an 8-1 vote. The board granted variances for lot area, lot width and setback violations. In exchange, attorney Gary Goodman agreed to redraw a property line to expand one of the new lots.

Testimony over the subdivision began last month, but the board adjourned the hearing until discrepancies over the development's site plan were resolved.

Zoning Officer Nancy Koedertiz noted that one of the new lots was proposed to include less than 5,000 square feet of lot area. A lot of such diminutive size is smaller than the actual definition of a lot in the borough's code, she said.

Goodman then agreed to redraw the subdivision line to enlarge one of the proposed new lots and reduce the lot area of the other.

Two First Street residents asked the board not to approve the subdivision, asserting that their neighborhood is already awash with parking lots and large-scale commercial developments. This summer, the board approved a large mixed-use building at the corner of First Street and South Avenue.

For resident Carol Dowling, who has fought development proposals at the site four times in

twenty-five years, the subdivision was a case of builders cramming unnecessary houses into established neighborhoods.

"If you changed the code from 50 feet to 75 feet, that's the way it should stay," Dowling said. The two new lots, at 60 and 65 feet wide, are short of the land use ordinance's requirement of 75 feet.

Following that line of reasoning, board member Matt Glennon said zoning ordinances were established to prevent overdevelopment in residential neighborhoods.

"There was a decision by the borough to make the zone 7,500 square feet... it was done to keep from trying to shoe-horn houses into every open spot in town, and I think this is what's happening here," Glennon said, before casting the lone vote against the subdivision.

Board member John Deitch pointed out that the subdivision was proposed in a patchwork zone in which very few nearby properties fit into a classic residential neighborhood. The aesthetics of the oversized lot would actually

be improved by adding a second single-family house, he said.

"This street looks like a smile without a tooth," Deitch said. "There's a gap in the neighborhood."

Several board members were concerned the large lot might develop into an attractive location for an unwanted large building or

apartment complex if the application weren't granted.

"An empty lot would be an invitation for an extension of Martine Avenue," said board Chairman Greg Cummings, casting his vote in favor of the plan.

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7:00 p.m. Family Service of Holy Communion
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December 26
10:00 a.m. Service of Lessons & Carols

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Commentary

Answering an eternal Christmas question

More than a century ago, on Sept. 21, 1897, The New York Sun published what was to become the most widely read and quoted letter to a newspaper. Its message is as valid today as it was 104 years ago. Below is the full text of that letter and the reply written by Sun editorial writer Francis Pharcellus Church.

Dear Editor:
I am eight years old.
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West 95th Street

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the worlds would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond.

Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else more real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



Letters to the editor

DECA members grateful for support

To The Record-Press:

On behalf of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School DECA Chapter, I want to thank all of the students, teachers, parents and other community members who contributed to our service activities this past fall.

DECA's October canister drive raised more than \$2,000, which is an outstanding achievement in the eyes of our organization. This money was used to support community service activities sponsored by DECA in conjunction with the Interfaith Council of Union County. These activities included an annual Halloween party and Christmas party for Interfaith families. Monetary donations were used to purchase Halloween costumes and gifts from "Santa" for the children associated with the Interfaith Council.

Other service activities conducted by DECA this fall included the donation of turkeys and food to the food bank run out of the Fanwood Presbyterian Church; the preparation and serving of a full Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless at the United Black Community Center in Plainfield; and

the coordination of an "Adopt-a-Family" program with the Interfaith Council. DECA was able to adopt 21 Interfaith families this year, providing for everything from basic clothing needs to additional gifts on their wish-lists.

Anyone who puts a dollar in a DECA canister, cooks or carves a turkey, or bands together to "adopt" an entire family at Christmas helps to make these community service activities come to life. A very special thanks goes to those parents and friends who willingly gave up their own Thanksgiving morning and afternoon to help with our dinner in Plainfield, and to those who provided generous contributions to the Adopt-a-Family program and toy drive on behalf of their families or businesses. Without your help, DECA students would never have the opportunity to organize these programs or to experience the sense of satisfaction that comes from giving back to others. We appreciate your support — and we're learning to live by the example you set.

ELIZABETH ELKO
President, DECA 2004-2005

A new standard for food donations

To The Record-Press:

I am writing this letter to thank everyone who generously contributed to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. This holiday season's drive was an astounding success because of our supporters.

We were able to gather several dozen bags of nonperishable foods such as peanut butter, jellies, soups, and canned meats, collecting more items this year than in years past! Many individuals also generously contributed financial donations to our drive, surpassing total monetary donations for all previous years.

New Jerseyans have long prided themselves on being a kind, caring, generous people who do everything in their power to help their friends and neighbors during the holiday season and throughout the

entire year. Your gift helped keep that spirit alive and for that, I thank you.

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey is one of the state's largest suppliers of groceries for charities, soup kitchens, and food pantries. With your help, we were able to reach many families in need. With just a little help, they will enjoy the holidays the way everyone should, with family and with enough to eat. United in our spirit of community service, we all help fight the battle against hunger.

My office takes great pride in acting as a dropoff site for the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. Thank you again for your kind and generous support.

With warm holiday wishes,
Assembly woman LINDA STENDER
District 22

Police respond to driver's complaint

To The Record-Press:

In a recent letter to the editor, local resident Len Feder explains how he drives down South Avenue daily from Fanwood to Cranford to go to work. He complained about police enforcement of traffic violations, and he went on to further explain how he'd rather drive through a yellow or sometimes even red traffic light rather than placing wear and tear on his vehicle's brake system.

To the fine citizens, taxpayers and visitors of Fanwood who enjoy the high quality of life here, I am sorry that you were subject to this poorly drafted rambling of Mr. Feder's opinions, which he cannot support with facts.

Having said that, I wish to state the facts for Mr. Feder, who is also a taxpayer and a citizen. Mr. Feder, you stated in your letter that the traffic lights in Fanwood are too short before turning red, which causes you to run through them in an effort to not damage your brakes. Every traffic light in Fanwood, with the exception of Terrill Road and South Avenue, has been replaced over the past several years and is electronically and remotely monitored by either Union County or the State of New Jersey. Each one has a one and a half second delay at all points of the intersection before the opposing traffic can turn green. This is intentional so that those who are in the intersection while it's yellow can proceed with caution, and those that are awaiting the opposing green are safe from collision.

Mr. Feder, you stated you never considered South Avenue as a dangerous road to drive on. Well, sir, in the state of New Jersey pedestrian fatalities are the highest per capita in the nation. Of the 747 pedestrian fatalities in this country in 2003, 147 of them occurred on New Jersey roadways. Of those 147 fatalities, there were none in the Borough of Fanwood. Why is that? Because we are doing our jobs and doing it well! We are a proactive police

department, sir, not a reactive police department. The state and federal governments have stepped up a program to enforce pedestrian traffic safety now more than ever.

On behalf of the PBA of Fanwood, I am sorry that you are not happy with our enforcement techniques, the color of our police cruisers or the amount of emergency lighting on them. This safety campaign that we promote every day goes beyond your feelings, sir. It's not just you in this town, Mr. Feder; it's about everyone's overall safety and well being.

Mr. Feder, our goal is simple. We enforce the traffic laws along all the roadways in Fanwood. Our job is to ensure that traffic flows safely, timely and within the provisions of the law. I have to say that you, Mr. Feder, are the exception and not the rule. Most people are glad that they always see a Fanwood black and white patrolling around. It makes them feel safe to know they are in good hands. Most people we talk with show their appreciation in this town's law enforcement.

My best suggestion to you, Mr. Feder, is to please think a minute before you act. The opinions offered in your letter give no direct exposure to any facts and could be viewed as negative or impersonal to some. Nonetheless, our great nation affords us the freedom of speech. With that freedom there is some ethical responsibility to report the facts as they are and to be responsible for one's actions.

Mr. Feder, our enforcement of the law may seem a bit aggressive to you, but know this: For as many summonses that may have been written so far this year, there are four times as many breaks given!

With enforcement, sir, comes compassion and understanding.

Please everyone, have a safe and happy holiday!
Patrolman BRIAN J. BARTIROMO
State PBA Delegate
Local 123, Fanwood

Jersey Boy

Mike Deak

The ghosts of Christmas past

All merry Christmases were alike then.

In Neshanic Station, where I tried to grow up, comfort and joy were the absolutes of the season. Pouting — my natural state of being then and now — stopped at the threat of coal in my Christmas stocking. My eyes ached with longing when I studied the Sears Christmas catalog as if it were a Kabala of toy mysticism. At night, when my throat was raw from singing carols all day in school, I watched the snow skid like tattered pieces of a dream through the warm glow of Christmas lights outlining the back porch. It was warm and cozy, in bed and a deep and velvet sleep, came to erase the anxious time before Christmas morning.

Remembering those child's Christmases is at once both pleasant and sad. It is pleasant because, well, I was fortunate to have Christmases that resembled a Norman Rockwell ideal. The family was harmonious (except for arguments over whether the turkey was done) and the setting was seeped with the mystery and the beauty of the season (was that a holy star or an isolated street-light that hung in the distance over the church's live nativity?) It is sad because it is a memory of what we have lost, not just the world of wonders, but also the meaningfulness, purity, sentiment and benevolence of the season.

The cards with which we now deal most in the holiday season do not bear greetings of good cheer, but the dire credit statements of a raw January. Like members of a cargo cult, we perform our commercial ritual without thinking about what we are doing or why we are doing it. Sometimes I think we would all be better if we returned to the practices of childhood and made potholders for each other and cards with crayons and construction paper. It is a futile hope that we all will be prompted by childhood memories to seriously review our values, see how they have changed since the days of relative innocence and make the necessary adjustments.

I do not want to dwell on the maudlin aspects of nostalgia; you get wet if you spit too much into the wind. I could write forever about those days, about the surreptitious plans to transport Santa Claus from the firehouse to the church when their Christmas parties were on the same night. But that would take too long, so instead I will write about the joy of Christmas caroling.

It's a frosty Saturday night when we gather in the church basement to go caroling from house to house in our small town. Because I am one of the little ones, they tell me to stand in front; I imagine my face has the frightened look of someone who wants to do so well so badly that he knows he is just going to screw up.

At first our voices are so enthusiastic that the adults tell us "not too loud," and at about the fifth house (Mrs. Vermeulen is going to have hot chocolate for us and animal crackers too!) our voices hang suspended in the brittle air with the brilliant clarity of a crystal rose. It is a moment of absolute still beauty as the carol's individual notes take shape in the clouds of warm breath.

Suddenly the moment is lost when the mechanical flatulence of a holey muffler (whose Studebaker is that?) forces us off the road and never again that night do we ever quite regain that perfect balance, that awesome harmony.

In that epiphany of harmony, we were the messengers of a different world, of a place of peace, love and brotherhood, where good will is exchanged freely and children and adults alike are allowed the luxury of wonder and the belief in something that is not real.

As adults, we may never again reach that moment of perfect balance and harmony, but that does not mean we should stop trying.

The Record-Press is here for you

The following information should help you get your ideas and community news into The Record-Press:

Call Editor Gregory Marx at (732) 396-4219 with story suggestions, questions or comments. For sports, call Chad Hemenway at (732) 396-4202.

Our address: The Record-Press, 301 Central Ave., Clark, NJ, 07066.

Our fax number is (732) 574-2613.

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Letters may be edited for content, brevity, good taste and libel. Letters should be typewritten and include the writer's daytime telephone number for verification, if necessary.

Send letters to the above address or fax number.



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WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY MOVIE?



KAREN ROBINSON
Cranford

"The Christmas Story." My husband and I just enjoy it together. We crack up; we think it's funny.



CHRISTINA CORLETT
Cranford

I'd have to say "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." It's sort of a sweet message for the kids.



BERNHARD AMSTUTZ
Cranford

Really, I never watch movies during the holidays.



SEAN QUEENAN
Cranford

I like "It's a Wonderful Life." It's a real feel-good movie.



PATTI CARINO
Cranford

My son and I watched "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" with Jim Carrey and we liked that one a lot.



The Friends of the Fanwood Library Book Sale volunteer crew included local Scouts as well as residents helped set up more than 4,000 books for the sale.

Fanwood book sale was a smash

FANWOOD — The Friends of the Fanwood Memorial Library held their most successful annual book sale ever on Oct. 2. The library support group collected more than \$3,000, a 20 percent gain over last year's proceeds.

On the front lawn of the library, at Tillotson Road and North Avenue, the Friends displayed a dozen tables overflowing with books in categories such as fiction, non-fiction, biography, history, mystery, romance, cookbooks, self-help and children's. Also for sale were children's toys, tapes, and videos. Prices went up this year but remained low: hardcovers, 25 cents; paperbacks,

75 cents; children's, 50 cents.

As with any project of this size, many people worked long and hard to make it a success. The collecting, sorting, setting up, and cleaning up were accomplished by adult and student volunteers as well as several Scout troops.

The Friends have enlisted the help of new volunteers for next year's sale, which will occur at a new location — the Forest Road Park Building. However, more volunteers are needed and welcome. People interested in serving on the Book Sale Committee should call Carol Campbell at (908) 322-9179.

Lawsuit filed to stop state's needle exchange

Senator Thomas H. Kean, Jr. and Assemblyman Eric Munoz, M.D., who represent District 21, recently filed a lawsuit in Mercer County Superior Court challenging former Governor James E. McGreevey's Oct. 26 Executive Order instituting a pilot syringe access program in New Jersey.

"We believe the governor grossly exceeded the emergency powers granted in wartime 1941 and in doing so overstepped his responsibilities and constitutional powers," said Kean. "We understand that needle exchange programs are by their very nature controversial. It is for that reason that a series of legislative hearings were held on this question. As elected officials we have responsibilities and constitutions of our own and we owe it to those we represent to be part of the process. This is not government by fiat."

Under McGreevey's executive order, cities with the highest prevalence of HIV due to injection drug use would be eligible to start a needle exchange program if they meet certain criteria.

"As a medical professional I can say that this executive order is both bad public policy and bad health policy," said Munoz, who is also a physician at UMDNJ. "The scientific evidence to date on whether needle exchange is successful in curbing HIV is at best ambiguous."

"There is also an equity issue that hasn't been considered," Munoz continued. "The State doesn't provide free syringes to people with medical conditions, such as diabetes. It is unjust to provide people who are committing a crime with services that aren't made available to the general public."

Along with Senator Kean and Assemblyman Munoz, Senator Ronald L. Rice, D-28, and

Legislative notes

Assemblyman Dr. Joseph Pennacchio, R-26, were listed as plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

Law allows towns to put up stop signs

Legislation sponsored by Senator Thomas H. Kean Jr., (R-21), that would allow local officials to determine where to place stop or yield signs at intersections without the permission of the Commissioner of Transportation was signed into law recently.

Previously, only counties could place a stop or yield sign at an intersection without the prior approval of the state.

"Returning control of our local streets to our hometown officials will help make our streets safer," Kean said. "Local officials are

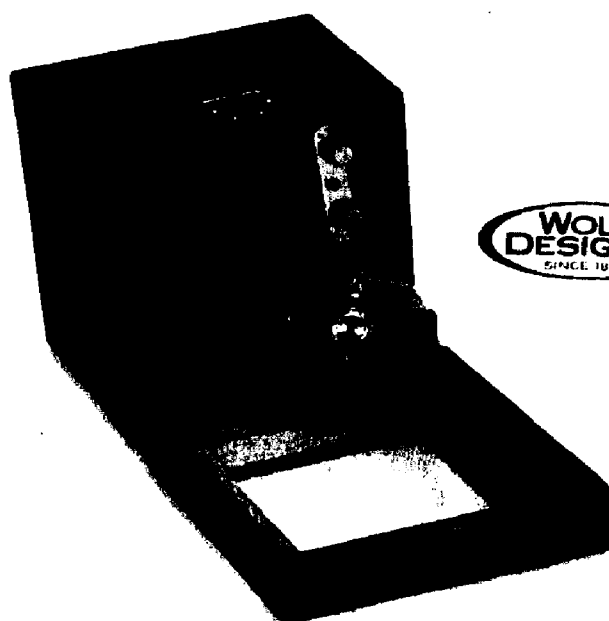
more flexible and able to react in a more timely manner to changes in traffic patterns or traffic volume."

This legislation would allow municipalities to designate by ordinance or resolution any intersection as a stop or yield intersection without the approval of the State Commissioner of Transportation. The measure would also permit a municipality to erect stop signs within 500 feet of a school or playground. This bill would only apply to streets that are self-contained within a municipality.

"By eliminating two layers of

red tape at the county and state level, our home towns will be able to adapt more quickly to unforeseen changes in our neighborhoods," Kean said. "I am optimistic that this bill will give towns the resources they need to respond to specific problems regarding local streets."

The bill will also allow counties to set speed limits, designate no-parking zones and crosswalks, erect stop or yield signs and paint median and shoulder lines on self-contained county roads without the prior approval of the Department of Transportation.



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WESTFIELD — David Kane received a special honorary membership award plaque from the Genealogical Society of the West Fields at its 25th anniversary luncheon at the Echo Lake Country Club on Oct. 23 for the many services and information he has contributed to genealogical research in the Westfield area.

Kane has helped hundreds of researchers throughout the United States and abroad locate their "First Families of Westfield" roots through his website, westfieldnjhistory.com. Kane says that his lifelong interest in genealogy was sparked by a remark made by his grandmother that he was related to Jacob Clark, who is buried in the cemetery of the First Presbyterian Church. As a consequence, he has traced more than 2,500 descendants of Jacob and Temperance Clark, whose house was located in Mountinside on land that is now part of the Watchung Reservation.

Although born in Morristown, Kane was raised in Westfield, where he lived until he graduated from Holy Trinity High School in 1971. He then traveled west in 1974 and earned a bachelor's in biology and master's in landscape architecture from schools in Oregon, as well as a certificate in computer programming from ITT in Seattle. He worked in the computer industry in Washington, Massachusetts, and California, initially as a trainer, and lastly as manager

of West Coast/Pacific Rim operations for a pharmacy software company. It was also through his persistent efforts with the New Jersey Historical Society that the missing "Greaves Papers" that had been turned over to their society were finally located when they were moving to their new location in 1997. The Greaves Papers were hand-written genealogical notes compiled by Richard Pearson Greaves, who lived in Westfield most of his life. Greaves died in 1948 at age 85. These notes listed chronologically the colonial families of Westfield with their names, dates of birth and deaths of the founding fathers and their descendants. Copies of these notes are now in the possession of Kane, the Westfield Historical Society and The

Genealogical Society of the West Fields.

After obtaining possession of the Greaves Papers, Kane sent the vast majority of the files on hard copy to Milt Ranking of Valencia, Calif., who spent many months transcribing and computerizing them.

Although he now resides in Nashville, Tenn., Kane has been working on a mapping project of early Westfield with former Town Historian Dr. Homer Hall, who now lives in Exeter, N.H., and with attorney Gary Maher of Garwood, who has also contributed much help and information to the Genealogical Society of the West Fields. In addition to his local website he also has another website, genealogyinprint.com, a personal venture into publishing and bookselling.

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No relief on railroad whistle until April

By BRAD BISHOP
THE RECORD-PRESS

WESTFIELD — Beleaguered residents on the south side will have to wait a few extra months for relief from jarring train whistles at a grade crossing on Rahway Avenue.

According to a press release by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) last month, a proposed regulation that would allow communities to silence train horns will likely not take effect until April.

Currently, trains crossing roadways at grade are required to sound their horns between 96 and 110 decibels to ensure that motorists and pedestrians are aware of oncoming locomotives. Residents say the shrill whistles are sounded at inconvenient hours, sometimes in the early morning or late at night.

When adopted, the rule change will allow municipalities to create so-called "quiet zones" at rail crossings equipped with augmented safety features. The new regulation was originally scheduled to take effect last weekend, after a year of public comment.

But after receiving approximately 1,400 public comments about the rule change, the FRA

decided to allot extra time for "analysis and consideration." The regulation will be published in the Federal Register in January, and would become law on April 1.

Westfield's engineering department has prepared specifications for a safety upgrade at the Rahway crossing that they believe will be sufficient to secure "quiet zone" status. Currently, the crossing is protected by a two-way gate system equipped with flashing lights.

"We've waited 10 years for this, so I guess we can wait another three months."

— James Foerst

According to Town Administrator Jim Gildea, officials plan to install a center island in the center of the crossing to prevent motorists from making "S-turns" to pass between the two gates. The roadway will be repaved and striped on the approach to the tracks, and new signage will be installed to alert drivers to the presence of a railroad crossing.

Though the town won't know the project's cost until it is put out to bid, Gildea estimated the safety upgrade would carry a price tag of \$15,000 to \$20,000. When Rahway Avenue was repaved this summer,

the town decided to leave the southernmost section alone until the FRA regulations were adopted. So unexpended money from the summer project will be available for the railroad crossing plan, Gildea said.

Fourth Ward Councilman Jim Foerst said localized whistle bans were commonplace until the mid-1990s, when studies indicated increased safety risks at grade crossings where whistle bans had

months."

Foerst said the railroad island would probably not be in place on April 1, because officials want to ensure it complies with the regulation and is installed properly.

"We want to get it right the first time," Foerst said.

The railroad whistle isn't the only complaint of area residents. Just across the Clark border of the town's southernmost residential district, the J. Manheimer factory has drawn numerous complaints from residents complaining about unpleasant odor emitted from the Terminal Avenue facility.

The company is in the process of mitigating the problem, but Foerst said he's still receiving e-mails and complaints from Fourth Ward residents.

"We know there are no physical side effects... but there are quality of life issues still out there," he said.

Next door to Manheimer, residents could be facing still another development in the form a large-scale senior housing project. Foerst said town officials are monitoring the progress of the project's approval process, which is opposed by its industrial neighbors in Clark.

"Right now, it's too early for us to know what will happen," Foerst said.

been enacted. But the federal regulation was a one-size-fits-all policy that didn't distinguish between rural rail crossings in Montana or residential crossings in New Jersey, Foerst explained.

The new localized approach — when it is finally enacted — will allow flexibility in train whistle rules while ensuring that safety isn't compromised, he added.

"Regardless of whether Rahway Avenue is designated as a quiet zone, we want to increase safety at the intersection," Foerst said. "We've waited 10 years for this, so I guess we can wait another three

A perfect score!

Scotch Plains resident Sara McArdle, a senior at Union County Magnet High School, recently scored a perfect 1600 on her SATs. According to the Educational Testing Service, which administers the SATs, only 939, or .0006 percent, of high school seniors who took the SATs in 2004 scored a 1600. McArdle plans on studying biomedical engineering in college. She is pictured here along with her mother Maria after being congratulated by Union County Freeholder Chairman Angel G. Estrada (second right), Vice Chairman Rick Proctor (right), Freeholder Lewis Mingo (left) and Dr. Thomas Bistocchi (second left), superintendent of Union County Vocational-Technical Schools.



MLK Association again sponsors essay contest

WESTFIELD — Members of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Westfield hope to encourage students to focus on the principles of Dr. King by sponsoring their annual essay contest, which for the fourth year will also include poetry and art. The theme for the 2005 contest is "Fear and How to Conquer It."

The contest is open to all Westfield students in public and private schools. Members of the contest committee will collect the essays, poems and artwork from

the schools on Thursday, Jan. 6. The prizes for the best essays, poetry and artwork will be awarded at the annual Dr. Martin Luther, Jr. commemorative service, to be held at the Temple Emanu-El 1 p.m. Jan. 17. All prize recipients will be notified by the Committee the week prior to the service.

Students can refer to passages from Dr. King's book *The Strength to Love: Antidotes for Fear* (chapter 14) for more background on his philosophy. Specific instructions

for elementary, intermediate and high school students are available in the schools.

Prizes for the contest are savings bonds in \$50, \$100, \$200, and \$500 denominations at the various grade levels and categories.

Contest committee members include Donnell Carr, Patricia Faggins, LeVar Harris and Elizabeth Wolf.

"We chose 'conquering fear' as this year's theme to give students an opportunity to reflect on fears that Americans face today, such as

terrorism, economic failure, crime, and domestic violence," said Wolf. "In *The Strength to Love*, Dr. King wrote, 'In these days of catastrophic change and calamitous uncertainty, is there any man who does not experience the depression and bewilderment of crippling fear, which, like a nagging hound of hell, pursues our every footstep?'"

For further information about the contest, Wolf can be reached at (908) 654-6770 or elizabethwolf@comcast.net.

Legislators announce state funding for projects

Senator Nick Scutari, Assemblyman Jerry Green and Assemblywoman Linda Stender recently announced that municipalities and organizations in the 22nd Legislative District will be receiving a total of \$1,053,000 as

part of statewide initiatives in the 2005 state budget.

"As costs continue to rise, municipalities are faced with difficult financial decisions. Many worthwhile projects cannot be completed due to lack of funding," said

Stender. "Senator Scutari, Assemblyman Green and I recognize that these projects would not be completed without state aid and are delighted to have assisted in obtaining these funds."

Local projects that will receive funding from the state include the following:

The Borough of Fanwood will receive \$130,000 for the LaGrande Park facility and field realignment. This funding will also be used for upgrades to the facility and beautification projects.

Fanwood, the Township of Scotch Plains and the regional Board of Education will receive a shared services grant of \$73,000 for the Field of Dreams Project. This will be used for continuing the shared services project of playing field improvements at Park Middle School.

Scotch Plains Township will receive \$50,000 for fire department communications equipment.

The Jewish Community Center of Central Jersey, located on Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains, will also be receiving \$30,000 for recreational equipment.

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Obituaries

Mitchell Albert

WESTFIELD — Mitchell A. Albert, 73, died Dec. 14, 2004 at his home.

He was born in Brooklyn and had lived in Westfield since 1962.

Mr. Albert was with Revlon Inc. for over 30 years, retiring in 1992 as the human resources director of its Edison plant. He also was an adjunct professor at the City University of New York and Middlesex County College in Edison.

He held a bachelor's degree in economics from Queens College of CUNY and a master of business administration degree from the CUNY system. Mr. Albert

was active with the Middlesex County College Foundation along with the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts in Westfield.

Surviving are his wife of 48 years, Glenda J. Pines Albert; two daughters, Cecily Cossio of Lorton, Va., and Meredith Evans of White Springs, Fla.; three sons, Hugh of Hawthorn Woods, Ill., Craig of Round Hill, Va., and John of Foothill Ranch, Calif.; a brother, Sheridan of Schraon Lake, N.Y.; and 15 grandchildren.

Private arrangements were by the Gray Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Westfield Rescue Squad.

Patricia Rizzo

SCOTCH PLAINS — Patricia S. Lucas Rizzo, 66, died Dec. 15, 2004 at JFK Medical Center in Edison.

Born in Rahway, she lived in Linden before moving to Scotch Plains three months ago.

Mrs. Rizzo was a saleswoman the last 12 years with Marshalls in Clark. In the 1950s she was an assembly line worker for six years with the Radio Corp. of America in Avenel.

She was a member of the American Association of Retired Persons.

Surviving are two daughters, Linda M. Bruno and Patricia A. Leo; a brother, Robert S. Lucas; and two grandchildren.

Services were held Saturday at the Werson Funeral Home in Linden. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to American Lung Association, 1600 Route 22 East, Union, NJ 07083.

Nancy Mary Bruno

SCOTCH PLAINS — Nancy Mary Eannucci Bruno, 92, died Dec. 17, 2004 at Genesis ElderCare-Westfield Center.

She was born in Trenton and had lived in Scotch Plains since 1925.

Mrs. Bruno was a homemaker.

Surviving are four sons, Nicholas, Joseph, Samuel and Michael; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Services were held Monday at the Rossi Funeral Home. Entombment was in the Graceland Memorial Park mausoleum, Kenilworth.

Grace Berner

SCOTCH PLAINS — Grace E. Berner, 92, died Dec. 17, 2004 at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in Brooklyn, she lived in Queens and East Orange before moving to Scotch Plains in 1952.

Mrs. Berner retired in 1975 as a sales assistant at Ginger's Bakery in Scotch Plains. She graduated from the Brooklyn Business School in 1932 and at one time was a financial clerk with an Elizabeth bank.

She was a parish volunteer at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church, where Mrs. Berner was active in the Altar Rosary Society and Parent-Teacher Association. She also was

a member of the Scotch Plains Senior Citizens Residence.

Her husband, Albert S., died in 1970. Two sisters, Gertrude Doherty and Sister M. Antoinetta, and a brother, James Gavin, are deceased.

Surviving are two sons, Rev. Albert J. and James J.; and two grandchildren.

A funeral Mass was held Tuesday at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church. Additional services were Wednesday at the Rossi Funeral Home, followed by burial in St. Gertrude Cemetery, Colonia.

Donations may be sent to Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 325, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076.

Nerina Gerardi

SCOTCH PLAINS — Nerina Fabris Gerardi, 92, died Dec. 19, 2004 at the Ashbrook Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

Mrs. Gerardi was born in Cosenza, Italy, and lived in Elizabeth before moving to Scotch Plains in 1999.

Her husband, Ernesto, is deceased.

Surviving are a son, Mario and

wife Michelle of Neptune; two daughters, Antoinette Sabunas and husband William of Colonia and Fran Shanley of Roselle Park; two brothers and a sister, all of Italy; and five grandchildren.

A funeral Mass was held Wednesday at St. John Vianney Roman Catholic Church, Colonia, following services at the Walter J. Johnson Funeral Home in Clark.

Carolyn Lozier

WESTFIELD — Carolyn J. Lozier, 84, died Dec. 18, 2004 at Morristown Memorial Hospital.

Mrs. Lozier was born in Montrose, Mo., and lived in Westfield for more than 35 years before moving to Toms River in 1986. She had resided in Basking Ridge since 2001.

She began her career teaching Grades 1-8 in a one-room school in Kansas. Mrs. Lozier spent 31 years with the Westfield school system and retired in 1991 as its food service director. She received her teaching certificate in 1938 from Pittsburg State Teachers College in Pittsburg, Kan.

Mrs. Lozier gave swimming lessons at the Westfield Y in the 1950s and dance lessons in her home for 20 years. She was a member of the Westfield Bridge Club and for 20

years a member of the Thum Club, a social dance group in Westfield.

She was a parishioner of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Toms River.

Her husband, Jack W., died in 1996.

Surviving are a daughter, Jacqueline C. Juntilla of Calif.; a son, Gary W. of Cranford; a sister, Betty Gibson of Redlands, Calif.; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Services were held Wednesday at the Lamington Presbyterian Church in Bedminster.

Arrangements were by the Layton Funeral Home in Bedminster. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Alzheimer's Association, 400 Morris Ave., Suite 251, Denville, NJ 07834.

Frank Von Uchtrup

Frank Von Uchtrup, 68, died Dec. 14, 2004 at his home in Dunellen.

Born in Queens, he lived in Hillsborough and Kenilworth before moving to Dunellen in 1993.

Mr. Von Uchtrup retired in 1998

as a sheet metal mechanic with Paul Steck Inc. in Springfield. He was an Army veteran.

Surviving are two sons, Kevin and Keith; two daughters, Karen Emery and Kim; a sister, Anna Harth; and two grandchildren.

Police Log

WESTFIELD

A Wells Street resident filed a report of criminal mischief to his motor vehicle on Dec. 14.

Officers arrested James Korn Jr. of Westfield for driving while intoxicated on Dec. 16.

Officers arrested Christopher Malden of Newark for possession of controlled dangerous substances on Dec. 16.

A Clark resident filed a report of assault on Dec. 17.

Officers arrested Jesse Stubbs of Roselle for driving while intoxicated Saturday.

A resident of North Wickom Drive reported someone threw eggs at his vehicle Sunday.

Community Life

Briefs

Y hosts exercise certification program

FANWOOD — The Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA and the National Exercise Training Association (NETA) are co-sponsoring a group exercise certification on Jan. 29 and a workshop titled "Fit for Life."

The workshop will run from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Jan. 29 and will focus on basic academic and practical applications of teaching group exercise. Another workshop will run from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Jan. 30 and will focus on working with the senior population. This workshop will give participants .5 American Council on Exercise Continuing education credits.

Space is limited. For registration information, call (800) AERO-BIC. NETA is a non-profit agency dedicated to offering education and certification to all who are interested and, in this way help to improve the quality of fitness instruction to the public.

Caregivers' support group at St. Helen's

WESTFIELD — A support group for those caring for elderly or chronically ill loved ones meets on the first non-holiday Monday of each month at 8 p.m. in the parish center of St. Helen's Church on Lamberts Mill Road.

These are information and sharing sessions. For information, call Marilyn Ryan at (908) 233-8757. The next meeting is Jan. 3. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, Aug. 1, Sept. 12, Oct. 3, Nov. 7 and Dec. 5.

Holiday programming on local cable channel

FANWOOD — Fanwood's municipal access TV channel will show a special presentation of "The Night Before Christmas" on Christmas Eve starting at 7:30 p.m.

Narrated by Westfield resident Bill Burke, the program will show illustrations that originally appeared in a children's story book from the early 20th century. The classic story will be repeated approximately every eight minutes. Comcast cable viewers may tune in any time between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. The program also will be shown on the same schedule on Dec. 25.

Also, Channel 35's community bulletin board will show viewers how to say Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays in 24 different languages. Each screen will be illustrated with photos of the countries where the language is spoken. The bulletin board may be seen 24 hours a day except at the times when "The Night Before Christmas" will be televised.

St. John's invites residents to worship

SCOTCH PLAINS — St. John's Baptist Church, located at 2387 Morse Ave., invites the community to attend its holiday events. The Christmas Eve service is scheduled for Dec. 24 at 11:15 p.m. On Dec. 26, the Sunday school Christmas program will begin at 8:15 a.m. followed by a special Christmas worship service at 10 a.m.

Pastor Porter and the St. John's congregation will welcome in the New Year at the annual Watch Night service on Dec. 31, beginning at 10 p.m. For more information call (908) 232-6972.

First Congregational sets Christmas schedule

WESTFIELD — The First Congregational Church invites visitors of all ages to attend Christmas Eve services at 5 and 10 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24 in the sanctuary at 125 Elmer St.

At 5 p.m., the Church School will present its annual Nativity pageant. This year's pageant is "Night of the Stars," a newly-staged retelling of the Christmas story that combines scripture and carol singing with a modern narrative.

A traditional candlelight service of lessons and carols will be held at 10 p.m., with music by Mendelssohn, Holst, Adam, Handel and Rutter.

On Sunday, Dec. 26, the church will offer a family worship service. The crib room is provided for children age two and under.

For more information, call (908) 233-2494.

In Fanwood, new life for an old home



Above, Marty Dunham, the host of History Channel's "Back to the Blueprint," describes the restoration work being done to a Victorian home on North Avenue in Fanwood. At right, Jay Griffith of Griffith Painting in Scotch Plains displays the silent paint remover system being used to strip away dozens of layers of paint on the building's exterior. The episode of the show featuring the home and two more in Plainfield will air in late January or February.



KEN BUNIEWSKI/CORRESPONDENT

Restoration of Victorian house draws a History Channel crew

By BRAD BISHOP

THE RECORD PRESS

FANWOOD — A century-old borough house is undergoing a major renovation its owners say will closely restore the stately Victorian to its original configuration.

They will be joined by a nationwide audience when their project is featured on an upcoming episode that will air on the History Channel.

The house, which sits on a large, open lot along North Avenue, was constructed between 1880 and 1890, said co-owner David Blechinger. Three years ago, he and Scotch Plains native Sasha Slocumb purchased the house, dedicating themselves to restoring a noteworthy dwelling that sits in a historic borough.

Blechinger said the couple restored the second floor of the house immediately and renovated the Victorian's basement last year. The next phase of the restoration will be much more visible, though. Blechinger said he intends to re-create a wrap-around front porch and gazebo that gave the house its distinct appearance.

"We're going to try to match it with the previous porch as closely as we can," Blechinger said. "...When it fell off, the original homeowners didn't replace it."

The house also included a second floor balcony, though the couple doesn't have any plans to restore that element.

More immediately, however, Blechinger and Slocumb are repainting the exterior of the house, and that part of the restoration has attracted most of the public attention. At the end of last week, members of a TV crew and home improvement workers battled for space in front of the stately structure, creating a blurry mosaic of gesturing arms, overlapping voices, and fragmented directives.

Further back, a group of curious passerby took in the scene, puzzled and bemused. One paused for a moment to snap a photo of the harried camera crew.

Directing the whole scene was Emily Benson, producer of "Back to the Blueprint," a show that airs Saturdays on the History Channel. She said the Fanwood house was selected by her crew for an episode chronicling first the lineage and then the restoration of Victorian homes.

Besides the North Avenue home, Benson said the episode will feature two other Union County Victorians, both of which are in Plainfield. The show will cover the process of window restoration, updating insulation, and reconstructing wooden floors, she said, and will air in late January or February.

"We'll go on the roof and check problems with gutters and dormers, replace and replicate wood trim, basically everything," she said. "In this case, the house needed to be repainted."

To accomplish that, the show enlisted Scotch Plains-based Griffith Painting, which will be stripping paint from the house's exterior and replacing it with a new coat. The entire process will take almost a month, said contractor Jay Griffith.

Griffith's crew stripped a sample of the paint from the house and discovered that the home was originally painted mint green. Before his company can restore the house to its original color, however, crews must remove 20 to 30 coats of paint that were spread across the exterior over the years.

Because the first coats consisted of potentially toxic lead-based paints, Griffith said removing them requires use of complicated technology. With the use of a Swedish-made infrared heater, the lead paint fibers are easily scraped from the house's siding, where they fall onto a plastic drop cloth spread out along the ground.

"The idea is that you're preserving the wood," Griffith said. "And this system is much more cost-effective because after you strip off the paint, you don't have to sand" the wood, he added.

Once a century of paint is removed, Griffith said his crew would repaint the house with environmentally-conscious organic paints. The new result will be far superior to the last paint job, which was done with a paint sprayer about 10 years ago, Griffith said.

Slocumb said the new paint job is just one check on a long list of renovation plans she has for the Victorian. She estimated that the full project will take about 20 years.

"Victorians are great, old, cool, and eclectic," Slocumb said, proudly gazing at her mansion. "This is a neat old house."

Madrigal Singers offer 'second chance at Christmas'

WESTFIELD — The Madrigal Singers, directed by Elaine Fiorino, will present "Star of Wonder," a program of words and music for the season at 4 p.m. Jan. 9 at First United Methodist Church, 1 East Broad St.

The concert offers a "second chance at Christmas" on the Sunday after Epiphany, according to Christian tradition the date when the wise men, following the star, arrived in Bethlehem and presented their gifts to the newborn babe. Selections from the Bible and Shakespeare read by the Rev. Edward Carll will tell the Christmas story and introduce groups of carols and motets spanning seven centuries, sung a cappella or with flute accompaniment by Jenny Cline and Susan Graham.

The program features the premiere of four carol arrangements for flutes by Mountainside composer John Sichel, a bass in the ensemble.

The program will open with a procession with plainchant variations on "Resonet in laudibus." "Hodie Christus natus est" follows, featuring a six-part contrapuntal setting by Sweelinck. As the Christmas story unfolds, Luke's account of the annunciation introduces three Renaissance hymns to Mary: Dunstable's "Alma redemptoris mater," Monteverdi's "Ave Maria," and Victoria's "Ne timeas Maria."

The angel's good news to the shepherds is proclaimed in two settings of "Angelus ad pastores" by Renaissance composer Juan Blas de Castro and con-

temporary composer Kenneth Mahy. As the shepherds arrive at the stable in Bethlehem, their awe and excitement are portrayed in Palestrina's six-part contrapuntal arrangement of "O magnum mysterium." Praetorius' carol setting of "Es ist ein Ros" connects the old prophecies with Christ's birth, while Holst's "Lullaby my liking" is a soft lullaby for mother and child.

The star which led the wise men to Bethlehem is celebrated in two contemporary pieces: "The linden tree," an arrangement of a traditional German carol by Jeremy Dale Roberts, and "Star of Wonder" by Terre Roche. "Omnes de Saba," Jacob Handl's five-part contrapuntal celebration of the wise men's journey to honor the newborn child, will follow.

Two modern meditations on Jesus's role as Savior draw on older sources — verses from an old English manuscript inspired by Bainton's carol setting of "A babe is born I wyls," and hearing a performance of a Bach piece led Elliot Levine to write his evocative "Jesus, gentle Savior." The program will end with the Christmas Eve scene from Hamlet, followed by three musical celebrations of Christmas: Robert Wetzler's "Rejoice! The savior is born," the Austrian carol "Still, still, still," and Elizabeth Poston's modern arrangement of the traditional English "Boar's Head Carol."

Admission is by donation at the door. For further information, call (908) 233-1570.

Westfield Scouts cultivate green plants, green thumbs

WESTFIELD — Eighteen scouts from Boy Scout Troop 72 are traveling to Duke Gardens on Jan. 8 in conjunction with their continuing education program on horticulture. The visit to the greenhouses will fulfill one of the requirements necessary to achieve the Gardening merit badge.

The Scouts initially became interested in plants after a workshop in October on topiaries. The counselors described to the boys how plants can be "trained" to create "forms" or topiaries, and the Scouts were given small leaf coleus with which to experiment. Their creativity led to multiple stemmed, twisted and various shaped forms. The Scouts will continue to shape their plants over the next six months.

A second workshop taught the Scouts about various plant propagation methods including by stem, root or leaf. Plant parts were provided to the boys so that they could experiment on their own. Additional workshops on propagation by seed and hydroponic gardening will be offered over the next several months during regular troop meetings.

The culmination of this year's horticultural experience will be for the Scouts to display their best plants for blue ribbon competition at the Rake and Hoe Garden Club Flower Show on May 18, 2005.

Additional plants will be grown for planting at the new Korean War Memorial which was designed and coordinated by Troop 72's senior patrol leader, Kevin Devancy, as his Eagle Scout project. The memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day.

The troop provides educational experiences through the merit badge program not only in horticulture but more than 100 other topics including auto mechanics, electronics and architecture.

Boys in the troop also have unique opportunities to experience wilderness survival on a Canadian island; sailing in Florida; hiking through the streets of New York City, Boston and Washington, D.C.; backpacking and canoeing. Troop 72 is sponsored by the Presbyterian Church on Mountain Avenue in Westfield and meets there every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Scoutmaster Jim McCabe at (908) 233-3457.



Boy Scouts from Troop 72 in Westfield work on topiaries for competition in the Rake and Hoe Garden Club Flower Show.

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UC names honor roll

SCOTCH PLAINS — Sister Percylee Hart, Principal of Union Catholic High School, announced the following local students are among those who achieved first honors for the first marking period.

Grade 12: Alexis Dedousis (Scotch Plains), Jennifer Feeley (Scotch Plains), Laura Morkowitz (Scotch Plains), Cheryl Ritter (Scotch Plains).

Grade 11: Ashley Meyn (Scotch Plains).

Grade 10: Elizabeth Casserly (Fanwood), Megan Dyckman (Fanwood).

Grade 9: Kristin Cassidy (Scotch Plains), Sedona Horning (Scotch Plains), Elizabeth Peach (Scotch Plains), Cynthia Ritter (Scotch Plains), James Trollo (Fanwood).

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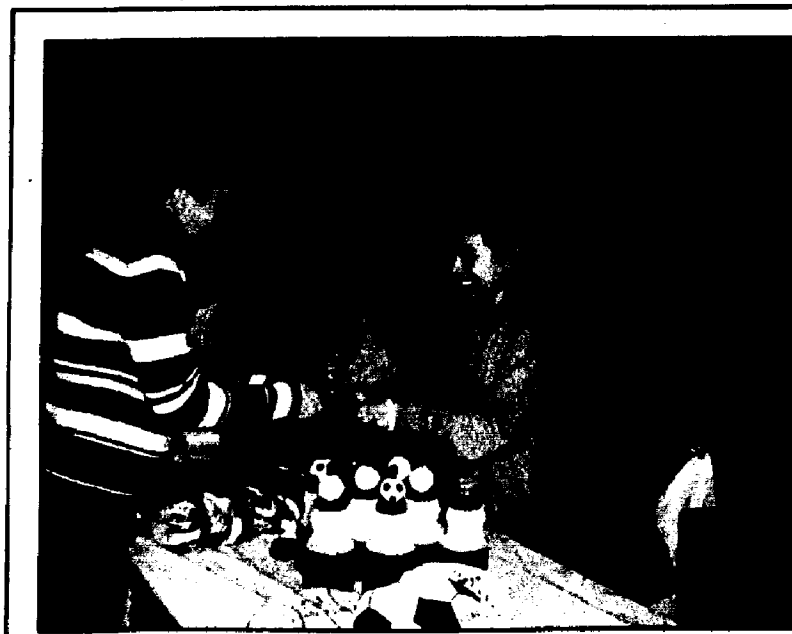
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Shopping for the holidays at Evergreen

Evergreen Elementary School in Scotch Plains recently hosted a holiday fair after school. The event chairwomen were Christine Dencker and Christine Hogan, and many students and parents volunteered and participated. Several local middle school students also volunteered their time, which contributed to the success of the day. The fair enabled young students to enjoy shopping for holiday gifts at reasonable prices. Pictured at left is Michele Blanck, PTA president, as she finalizes a sale with her son Matthew.

Full slate of programming on TV-36

WESTFIELD — During the week of Dec. 25-30, Channel 36 will feature three holiday shows as well as the district's "Focus on Our Schools" program, all produced or recorded by Westfield High School TV teachers and students. The schedule follows.

Saturday, Dec. 25: 10:30 a.m., "Focus on Our Schools" featuring Franklin School; 11 a.m., "Junkyard Christmas" (an original adaptation of "A Christmas Carol") performed by Westfield High School drama students; 12:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral Concert; 2:30 p.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert; 7:30 p.m., "Focus on Our Schools" featuring Franklin School; 9:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral

Concert; 11:30 p.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert.

Sunday, Dec. 26: 12:30 p.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert; 2:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral Concert; 4:30 p.m., "Focus on Our Schools" featuring Franklin School; 5 p.m., "Junkyard Christmas," performed by WHS drama students.

Tuesday, Dec. 28: 9 a.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert; 11:30 a.m., "Focus on our Schools" featuring Franklin School; 12 p.m., "Junkyard Christmas" performed by WHS drama students; 1:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral Concert; 4 p.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert; 7:30 p.m., "Focus on our Schools" featur-

ing Franklin School; 8 p.m., "Junkyard Christmas" performed by WHS drama students; 9:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral Concert; 12 a.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert.

Wednesday, Dec. 30: 9 a.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert; 12:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral Concert; 2:30 p.m., "Focus on Our Schools" featuring Franklin School; 3 p.m., "Junkyard Christmas" performed by WHS drama students; 4:30 p.m., Westfield High School Choral Concert; 8 p.m., Westfield High School Instrumental Concert; 10:30 p.m., "Focus on Our Schools" featuring Franklin School; 11 p.m., "Junkyard Christmas" performed by WHS drama students.

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SP-F High names honor students

SCOTCH PLAINS — The following students have earned academic honors at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School for the first marking period of the 2004-2005 school year.

High Honor Roll

Grade 9: Kathryn Albanese-Dema, Izabela Blach, Julianne Brennan, Trevor Cannon, Katelyn Cavanagh, Michael Cichon, Michael Cornachia, Bridget Cornwell, Noelle DeGregorio, John DeMaio, Janine Defeo, Silvano Dimonte, Sean Dolgin, Andrea Guzman, Christina Halma, Catherine Harley, William Hubbard, Marc Lheureux, Ming Lu, Elizabeth Minaki, Chibuzor Onwuanaegbule, Minal Patel, Brian Piccola, Jacquelin Saunier, Michael Scannell, Brian Senior, Camillia Shanks, Barbara Slauch, Harrison Stuppler, Kristen Thompson, Lindsay Trainor.

Grade 10: Kimberlee Appenzato, Alison Baier, Peter Bistis, Lisa Bloom, Allison Brown, Colin Campbell, Samantha Carow, Ana Castillo, Karina De Mair, Jessica Estriplet, Morgan Finkel, Kelly Frazee, Daisy Fung, Brittany Fusillo, Jennifer Gaglioti, Jennifer Gardella, Damian Gibbs, Genevieve Gilroy, Evan Goldsmith, Helen Han, Allison Hoynes-O'Connor, Matthew Huether, Magda Isack, Ashley Jacobi, Colleen LaForge, Christopher Lacko, Brittany Larkin, Jessica Lieberman, Jillian Lusk, Simone March, Stacy Marr, Julie Meurer, Kimberly Molnar, Sophie Neuhaus, Samantha Passarelli, Poojaben Patel, Portia Price, Heather Rodriguez, Maetal Rozenberg, Melissa Rupnarain, Alexandra Sebolao, Amanda Shukla, Tovi Spero, Lauren Lauren Spirko, Kathrine Stampler, Stacey Tanguy, Eric Wasserman, Kenneth Wasserman, Lauren Weissbrod,

Tiffany Wong, Jason Zelesnik.

Grade 11: James Alfano, Saif Alzoubae, Colleen Baines, Faye Bi, Daniel Bugg, Cleo Chou, Erin Crawford, Neil Dalal, Carolyn DiProspero, Jonathan DiFiore, Aaron Doliber, Joseph Fallon, David Ginsberg, Andrew Goldberg, Jonathan Greenspan, Sarah Halpern, Gary Herzberg, Zachary Hvizdak, Julie Hyman, Meaghan Kelly, Jessica Levine, Dana Levinson, David Mecca, Ian McNally, Elaine Piniat, Alexander Resnick, Barry Shapiro, Katherine Van Haasteren, Katerina Wong.

Grade 12: Jonathan Altman, Mathew Blasi, Gregory Bryant, Aliza Burns, Matthew Capodicasa, Kaitlin Carman, Rachel Charne-Baum, Elizabeth DeCataldo, Elise DeVries, Daniel Deegan, Jacquelin DeJohn, David Demair, Elizabeth Elko, Tracy Esposito, Dakim Gaines, Kerry Gander, Johanna Ghabour, Christopher Huether, Nora Isack, Kara Johnson, Steven Kazmierkiewicz, Hillary Klimowicz, Rebecca Koransky, Daniel LaForge, Andrew Loblance, Luke Makowski, Kelly McManus, Kaitlyn Meredith, Amy Mills, Stephen Mineo, Michael Paraboschi, Daniel Piccola, Jamie Quale, Sophia Riordan, William Rollins, Joanna Rosenberg, Justin Rowinsky, Kyle Ronca, Samuel Slauch, Brittany Speer, Elizabeth Stampler, Erica Stuppler, Amanda Walker, Andrew Watson, Katie Zaleski.

Honor Roll

Grade 9: Dana Abramson, Courtney E. Adamczyk, Andrea Apuzzio, Maureen Asante-Nkansa, Alana Bencivengo, Gregory Bencivengo, Amie Berlant, Courtney Bifani, A. Michael Bover, Samantha

Bremer, Ryan Bridge, Daniel Buckley, Rebecca Bush, Lisa Campbell, Julia Capodicasa, Bailey Cardinal, Anna Chapman, Daniel Ciabattari, Andrew Clark, Nicole Colineri, Kristen Conlan, Amanda Curcio, Lauren E. Cutrone, Caitlin M. Daly, Tyler Delmauro, Meghan Dhalwal, Patrick Doliber, Bryan Dougher, Joseph Dunn, Jayne Dzuback, Joseph Ellis, Ian Feller, Rebecca Fox, Nicole Fusco, Stephanie Goines, Samantha Greco, Colleen Hagerty, Wendy Harris, Lindsay Hauptman, Melissa Helock, Mary Henkels, Thomas Herchel, Brian Hessemer, Adam Horowitz, Jessica Impellizzeri, Alec Jacobs, Julia Joseph, Alyssa Karia, Samantha Knierim, Allison Kodan, Rachel Kreyer, Caitlin Leist, Rachel Leitner, Randy Lemenice, Jacquelin Lenoff, Scott Leyden, Andrew Livingston, John Loomis, Deidre Lyons, Brianne Mahoney, Andrew Manns III, Brian Many, Jesse Marvosa, Elizabeth McMillion, Victoria McNally, Molly Meehan, Jared Meyer, Taylor Molinaro, Nicholas Murray, Jessica Nagourney, Emily Nering, Jane Newcomer, Christina Olsson, Rachel J. Parker, Justin Peer, Brian Pesin, Jaclyn Petrow, Stacia Pieach, Matthew Plagge, Steven Polhamus, Neil Pratt, Briana Redmount, Margaret Reilly, Maria Pia Rivero, Tanaya Rivers, Maya Robinson, Molly Rodino, Marc Rosenberg, Christine Roser, Erin Rossi, Scott Salmon, Joseph Schiavo IV, Alexandra Segal, Grace Sigona, Adam Silverman, Kunal Sodhi, Alex Soloway, Katlyn Soriano, Gabriella Sosnowski, Gailmarie Sprague, Scott Stefanik, Alyssa Straniero, Meghan Sullivan, Nicole Tavares, Alexis Turner, Samuel Ungar, Janelle Vanderveld, Anthony Vecchione, Amanda Vitello, Allison

Vogel, Grace Wallden, Vivian Wong, Christina Woods, Molly Yergalonia.

Grade 10: John Acio, Lauryn Adams, Yeershati Ahati, Anne Arasin, Kristen Barry, Victoria Bauman, Gregory Bayard, Courtney Berger, Shyam Bhojani, Jonathan Birnbaum, Amanda Boback, Kendall Boyda, Katherine Buro, Cathleen Carr, Colin Chan, Michelle Chan, Diana Chaves, Nikolai Chowdhury, Inbar Cohen, Mariassa Crawford, Terence Cronin, Alex Cveticovich, Erin Daly, Grant Darwin, Christina Defeo, Jenna Delle-Donne, Laurel Devlin, Aileen Drum, Daniel Foley, Stephanie Fredas, Kirstan Fuller, Alexandra Garber, Kaye Garcia, Jason Giombi, Briana Giansullo, Mitchell Gorbunoff, Dana Hankin, Ibrahim Helm, Diandra Hillard, Steven Jacobus, Austin Jefferson, Cristin Joy, Catherine Kaeserman, Eric Kaufman, Jessica Khan, Shirley Kim, Maggie Kosciolk, Alexander Kuhn, Katherine Lauricella, Ryan Lemence, Joseph Loblance, Samantha Loshavo, Brooke Lubin, Christopher Luby, Kathryn Magalhaes, Kelly Mahoney, Amanda Makowski, Kirsten Mandala, Courtney McCoy, Lauren Measina, Matthew Miller, Nikki Moses, Colin Moynihan, Erin O'Connor, Anthony Osterman, Jonathan Parisi, Heather Pasko, Tiffany Pasko, Adam Perez, Christopher Pflaum, Jeffrey Pober, Lindsay Port, Christopher Rau, David Regg, Anne Rivera, Liana Rivera, Christopher Rizzo, Christopher Rodriguez, Allyson Rome, Alana Rosato, Adda Roshansky, Andrea Rosko, Kyle Rowbotham, James Saccia, Michelle Sanghera, Laurynn Scholar, Danielle Sepe, Andre Smith, Angela Smith, James Spaeth, Ian Starker, Megan Swick, Vincent Vicari, Stephen Wallden, Kimberly Wellinger, Shannon Wildstein, Arianna Williams, Nina Williams,

Lauren Wright, Allison Zazzali, Leigh Zeblockas, Caleb Zimmerman, Jennifer Zimmermann.

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Arts Guild visits 'Strange New Worlds'

"Strange New Worlds," a showcase of recent surreal painting by Ellen Angelastro, Val Dyshlov, Philip Shimko and Lee Allen Wells, will be presented at The Arts Guild of Rahway from Jan. 12 to Feb. 4, 2005. There will be a reception 1-4 p.m. Jan. 16. Admission is free.

Gallery hours are 1-4 p.m. Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 1-3 p.m. Thursday and 5-7 p.m. by appointment for large groups and school visits.

While surrealism as a style is most closely associated with certain artists of the 20th century, it has many precedents in works of much earlier eras. Modern surrealist artists sought to use the seemingly irrational images of dreams to express the madness,

anxiety and tensions of their age. Dream imagery has, however, been an inspiration for artists for hundreds of years. Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Breughel in the 1500s both produced major artworks of strange or bizarre images, often with grotesque imagery and distortions. Many realist or naturalistic artists at times used dreams as a starting point for epic and often disturbing creations.

While surrealism is not as prevalent a style as it was during the 1930s to 1950s, there is a continuing influence on artists who are seeking to express ambiguity, the tensions of modern life, fantasy or a sense of existential detachment. In many cases this trend has been fused with a lighter or

more buoyant desire, even playfulness that has led to the creation of colorful and at times whimsical imagery.

The works of painter Ellen Angelastro are colorful, painterly landscapes filled with flowers and trees with faces and hybrid imagery in a Cubist-influenced style that evoke a mild unease almost in spite of a palette that usually would indicate warmth and a sense of pleasure.

Val Dyshlov, trained in Russia, also brings some Cubist influences and an overt connection to certain styles of earlier eras of avant-garde art in the USSR. His images are representational but stylized, and he brings a distinct solidity of form, almost a sculptor's mentality, to his work.

Philip Shimko, a recent MFA grad from Montclair State and an adjunct professor at Kean University, has been working on a series of paintings filled with images and objects that hover on the line between recognizable objects and biomorphic imaginings. There is a strong sense of substance to his very painterly imagery as if his thickly-laid paint were actually in the process of becoming an object or figure.

Lee Allen Wells is represented in the exhibit by a series of moody landscape images with a blank white shape superimposed on top. These empty, almost floral spaces become a distinct element of each work, as if a white Korshach blot had been painted on more a formal picture.

The Arts Guild of Rahway is a non-profit multidisciplinary center for the arts located at 1670 Irving St., Rahway. For more information, call (732) 381-7511 or email artsguild1670@earthlink.net, or visit www.rahwayartsguild.org.

WAC welcomes '05 with 2 new exhibits

The Watchung Arts Center offers a pair of exhibits to ring in the New Year.

Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 3, the photographic and printmaking works of Janine Biunno, a recent graduate of Carnegie Mellon University's School of Fine Art will be exhibited in the upstairs gallery.

The exhibit, entitled "Synthesized Versions," will run through Jan. 29, with a reception for the artist slated for 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9. The public is invited.

Through her compositions, which are often found in serial form, Biunno hopes to convey a visual narrative in an almost storyboard manner.

"Every common place has a potential to tell a story," says Biunno, "and each person who dwells within a space has a role within a possible narrative. My

work deals with human interaction within a given space."

Another exhibit raises the question, "What do you call a lawyer who gives up her profession to pursue the more painterly life?"

In the case of Debra Frankel, you can call it a good idea, and that's not to disrespect her courtroom skills. "Exhibit One" for Frankel will be the collection of evidence found in the Lower Gallery during the month of January. A creative writer and thinker, Frankel set aside her career as a lawyer several years ago to build a case as an artist.

Her fascination with landscapes, and the bold colors and images found within those images will be on display in the exhibit. An artist's reception is slated 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9.

"I have always recognized that I had an artistic side," she said. "I began to paint part time as a hobby. My professional life took a dramatic turn when I received a warm response to my first show."

Since 1995, she has devoted herself full time to her art, focusing first on landscapes, then turning to figures. As with her landscapes, she tries to find unusual focal points, bold colors and even a variety of media to make her works come alive. She counts the Germans expressionists among her influences.

Her works have been displayed at The Show Bistro Café in Madison, Contrasts in Color at Berlex Laboratories in Montville, the Basking Ridge Library, the Morris County Library, the Art Matters Exhibit in Morristown and the Floral Fantasies Juried Exhibit at the Waterloo Village.



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Sports



Center Hillary Klimowicz scored 13 points against Shabazz Friday night and 11 points against Immaculate Heart Saturday but the Lady Raiders lost both games. The team travels to the West Coast this weekend for a tournament.

JOHN FEV/CORRESPONDENT

SP-F loses first two

By CHAD HEMERWAY
THE RECORD-PRESS

SCOTCH PLAINS — It is safe to say the Raiders girls basketball season has not gotten off the start they and first-year coach Lori Gear McBride would have liked.

But the quality of opponents — Shabazz in the home opener and Immaculate Heart in the Tip-Off Classic at Seton Hall University — has been top notch.

Immaculate Heart has started the season 2-0 and the only team standing in the way of the last two Meet of Champions crowns for Scotch Plains has been Shabazz. The victory was Shabazz's sixth straight over the Lady Raiders.

The girls looked to right the ship Tuesday before deadline against Linden.

After that, the Lady Raiders will fly to the West Coast to play in the Surf and Slam Hoop Classic in San Diego, CA. There once again they will be facing quality squads — some of the best in the country. Scotch Plains takes on Oakland Catholic (PA) on Dec. 27, Enid (OK) on Dec. 29 and Vacaville (CA) Dec. 30 before heading home New Year's Eve to rest quickly and prepare for Cranford Jan. 4 in Cranford.

In Friday night's 56-47 loss against Shabazz, Maura Gillooly led the team with 14 points, hitting four two-pointers, one shot from long range and three free throws. Hillary Klimowicz sunk 13 points and sophomore Allie Zazzali contributed seven points.

Scotch Plains was ahead 24-22 at halftime but the game was tied 37-37 by the end of the third quarter. Shabazz outscored the Raiders 19-10 in the final stanza to pull ahead. Both teams struggled from the line. The Raiders dropped in just six of 21. Shabazz went to the free throw line much more but hit just 25 of 41. Scotch Plains was able to force 21 Shabazz turnovers using a man-to-man defense.

It became clear there was a

hangover from Friday night's game when Scotch Plains took on Immaculate Heart the next day and lost 47-27. It was a



BASKETBALL

game the Raiders will likely soon put out of their minds. Scotch Plains scored just three first quarter points and went into the locker room at halftime

down 25-8.

Klimowicz led Scotch Plains scorers with 11 points but was in foul trouble early. Gillooly hit two three-pointers for six points and Jenny Burke chipped in seven points.

Through two games, Klimowicz is leading the team in field goal percentage (11-17, .647) with 18 rebounds, five blocks and four steals. Gillooly has shot 3-8 from three point range while dishing out six assists. Burke has passed five assists and has two steals.



Scotch Plains' point guard Jenny Burke (#21) and Lauren Benovengo (#24) do their best to defend against Shabazz Friday night in Scotch Plains.

JOHN FEV/CORRESPONDENT

DelDuca, Shaffer, Westfield wrestle shorthanded

By CHAD HEMERWAY
THE RECORD-PRESS

WESTFIELD — After a loss to East Side Friday, it looks as if the Westfield wrestling program may be in for a rough team season due to lack of students going out for the team.

Though results of the Blue Devils dual meets may not be much to look at, Westfield has enough talent in some individual weight classes to make some noise in tournaments in 2005.

"I talked to the kids and said it's a shame not enough kids in the school make the commitment

to wrestle it's the guys that are here working hard every practice that suffer," said head coach Glen Kurz. "But the kids that are here are fighting and I think many of them will have great individual years."

Unfortunately, Kurz will not be able to send out a wrestler at the 103, 130, 135, 140 and 145 to start the season — meaning Westfield will immediately face a 30-0 deficit because of forfeits. That number will hopefully decrease when 145-pound captain Tom DelDuca returns from injury. Last year DelDuca won the district and came within a

match of earning a trip to the state tournament in Atlantic City. In addition, Kurz said freshman Matt Shaffer or transfer Jason Perez could step into the 130-pound slot.

WRESTLING

Senior 119-pounder San Kramer has yet to be seen in the lineup either but is expected to start the season at the Roselle Park Tournament at the end of the month.

"(Kramer) has been solid,"

Kurz said. "He's very good and we need him in the lineup. He could be one of those guys that can have a lot of success this year."

Junior captain Andrew Shaffer at 152 pounds could be another Blue Devil to have individual success. He placed second in the districts last year earned third place at the Kearny Tournament over the weekend. Against East Side he recorded a pin.

"He really stepped up over the summer," Kurz said. "He got very focused and dedicated and did everything we asked of him over the off-season."

Junior Dan Whitney at 171 pounds has also showed a lot of improvement, especially in his win over the second seed at the Kearny Tournament. Whitney took fifth place. Junior Bobby Mroz at 189 pounds and Steve Cruikshank at 215 pounds are two others who show promise this season.

"Bobby is a hard-nosed kid," Kurz said. "He's never wrestled but he will help us out. Steve has been working with Shaffer all summer and spent a lot of time in the weight room."

Colin Mackay and Matt Kamel fill the 119 and 125-pound spots,

though Kamel moved up a weight class. Mackay recorded a pin against East Side and placed third at Kearny. Kamel had two wins at Kearny and placed sixth. Sophomore Marc Boyd steps in at 160 pounds. Kurz said he looked good against East Side and placed sixth at Kearny. Heavyweight Zack Bullek is a new guy that is learning the moves, said Kurz.

Westfield winter track ready for 2005 success

By DAVID LAZARUS
THE RECORD-PRESS

An infusion of fit soccer players added to the Group IV section cross country champions makes the Westfield Girls indoor track team led by head coach Jen Bussino a strong threat to retain their Union County relay and team championships.

Two-time All-County soccer star Emily MacNeil and cross country runners Annie Onishi and Meg Driscoll return with newcomer Miriam Becker-Cohen to make the Westfield four by 800 relay team one of the state's most formidable. MacNeil, the county indoor and outdoor champion in the 800-meter run, will also be a force in the 400-meter and a member

of the four by 400 relay team.

"I hope to make it back to the Meet of Champions this year and the team hopes to defend its county relay and individual team titles," said MacNeil. "I'm hoping to get my 800-meter time under 2:18 for the winter because I've never done that in the winter season."

Sophomore Jillian Kape adds strength to both relays and another soccer star, sophomore Erin McCarthy is part of a talented group that includes freshmen Stephanie Cortinhal, Catherine Cognetti, and Corrine Parkinson — adding to the middle distance depth.

While the strength of the team is clearly the middle and long distance runners, the team also should improve in the sprints where freshman

Christina Obiajulu joins returnees Ali Fleder and Erica Ammermuller.

The distances will be paced by cross-country stars Jen Danielsson, and Ayn Wisler as well as veteran Caitlyn Berkowitz. The hurdles appear strong with returning co-captains Lauren Nolan and Danielle Parkinson along with Emily Perry and Marlena Sheridan.

Kape and Perry return to pace the high jump and co-captain Christina Henry returns, along with Kate Anderson, to join newcomers Carolyn Cook and Christina Collucci in the shot put.

Boys

The boy's winter track team guided by coach Jack Martin is looking to continue the success

many of the runners had as the cross country season ended this fall.

Cross country star Jeffrey Perrella was named First Team All-State and he said he is confident that the success from the fall will translate into the indoor track season.

"The momentum we built up during the cross country season has really carried over into the winter season," said Perrella. "Not only are the veteran cross country guys psyched, but incoming athletes from other sports as well as first-timers to the high school athletic arena are adding to the excitement."

Led by Perrella and senior Rob Broadbent will lead the distance corps. Senior Michael Gorski will pole vault this season, along with fellow senior

Mike Woods, to form one of the most potent pole vault duos in the state. Last season the duo won nearly every pole vault relay they competed in and are strong threats to win the inaugural Group III Relay Jan. 9.

Broadbent, a 1:59 800-meter runner last spring, poses the most intriguing situation for Martin after exploding this past fall to drop over a minute from his Holmdel time to finish 25th at the Meet of Champions. Broadbent could branch into the other long distances this winter where Perrella should be one of the best in the state.

Sam Kim, Jake Brandman and John Aleksandravicius are the top sprinters and veteran Tyler MacCubbin returns as the top high jumper and hurdler.

Freshman lead win in Westfield

WESTFIELD — Monday in Westfield the Blue Devils girls' basketball teams dribbled its way to its first win in over a year.

Last year the team went 0-23 but Westfield, led by promising freshman, got an impressive 79-57 victory over St. Dominic to improve their record to 1-1 on the year.

Freshman Erin Miller bucketed 11 of 16 shots, including two three-pointers, and added nine free throws for a total of 33 points. She also has seven steals and seven assists.

Miller scored 25 of her 33 points in the first half to help the Lady Blue Devils to a 45-25 halftime lead. Westfield scored 28 points in the second period.

Fellow freshmen Stephanie Slodyczka and Gabrielle O'Leary contributed to the win as well. Slodyczka had 18 points and 20 rebounds and point guard O'Leary sunk 12 points and had eight assists. Slodyczka hit five shots from the field to go with eight free throws and O'Leary converted four shorts and four free throws.

Lauren Sinnenberg contributed three points while Katie Judd and Lauren Simmons had two points.

SPORTSCENE

WESTFIELD Hockey

Westfield 5, Cranford 5 — Sal Esposito had two goals and Jason Anderson, Greg Speir and Brian Davidson scored a goal each to account for the Blue Devils' output Monday at Warinanco Rink in Roselle. Westfield is now 0-2-2.

Boys basketball

Linden 63, Westfield 51 — The Blue Devils trailed by just one point, 22-21, going into halftime Friday in Linden but was outscored 23-10 in the third quarter during the team's first game of the season.

Eric Haynes dropped in 17 points and Mike Venezia scored 14 points, hitting four three-pointers,

for Westfield (0-1).

Boys swimming

Westfield 107, Union 63 — Westfield won the 200-yard free, 400-yard free and 200-yard medley relays to better its record to 4-0 Friday.

P.J. Harley won the 200-yard free, Pat Daurio finished first in the 500-yard free, Luke Baran

won the 100-yard fly and Brandon Cuba came out on top in the 200-yard IM.

Girls swimming

Westfield 128, Union 43 — The Lady Blue Devils finished first in every event Friday. Callie Meserole won the 100-yard breast, Lauren Winchester won the 50-yard free and Kristen Selert was

part of teams that finished first in the 200-yard free, 400-yard free and 200-yard medley relays.

SCOTCH PLAINS Boys basketball

Shabazz 67, Scotch Plains 44 — Scotch Plains trailed at the end of each quarter but Brian Dougherty scored 14 points for the Raiders (0-1) Friday in Newark.

Holiday Gift Guide

Paul Nazzaro's students mark the season with holiday concerts

WESTFIELD — In the spirit of the season, both the youth

and adult students of the Paul Nazzaro Music Studio have

recently participated in many holiday activities.

The younger students at Nazzaro's studio performed holiday pieces for each other on Dec.

12 at Nazzaro's studio. This get-together was the second of four planned throughout the year. The "piano parties" give students the opportunity to play in

front of their peers, siblings, and friends. Students played Christmas and Hanukkah songs on the piano and digital piano and enjoyed holiday cookies brought by families sharing their special family recipes. The next piano party is the Spring/Irish party in March.

The adult students participated in the December repertoire party on Dec. 9. These parties are small get-togethers to share playing and experiences with others, with festive wine and cheese, coffee and tea, and even pumpkin pie. They are an outlet for adults to perform for people sharing the same musical interests, and provide the opportunity to play in a casual and relaxed setting. Adult students support each other and talk about their own experiences in practicing and playing.

Both younger students and the adult students have been making digital recordings of pieces they have learned through the season. The "Winter Recordings" are on cassette tape and on the web, with all their music online for friends and family to hear from any web browser. Students are then able to share these tapes and online recordings with friends and family who would like to hear them play but do not have a piano or keyboard. They are also kept as

keepsakes for each family for years to come. Students also get CDs of their music at the end of the academic year featuring music they themselves have recorded throughout the year — a unique feature of the studio.

The studio also sponsored a food and coat drive to help the needy in local communities. Students and families have been donating non-perishable foods and items to benefit various local community outreach programs as part of the giving spirit of the holiday season. The drive was a great success this season. The donated food and coats went to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, a local community outreach program to help the needy throughout the state. The food bank distributes to homeless shelters, food pantries, residential programs, soup kitchens, child day care programs, and other programs throughout New Jersey.

The studio teaches all aspects of piano and keyboard repertoire, including classical, popular, jazz, seasonal, theory, MIDI, and music technology, and has experienced teachers teaching all age and skill levels, including grade school students through adults. For more information, contact Paul Nazzaro at (908) 232-3310 or www.NazzaroMusic.com.

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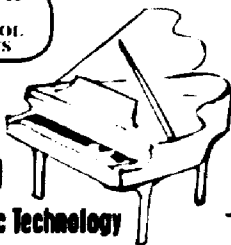
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Trumpet instructor joins staff at the NJWA studio

WESTFIELD — Professional musician and music educator Philip Rinaldi has joined the staff of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Music Studio as a trumpet instructor.



PHILIP RINALDI

A graduate of New Jersey City University with a degree in music, Rinaldi has taught private lessons and has conducted music clinics in area elementary and secondary schools. He has instructed school marching bands in Fair Lawn, Bayonne, Weehawkin, North Rockland and Union.

Rinaldi has appeared with various groups and entertainers such as the New Jersey Pops, Connie Francis, The Temptations, The Dupres, the Ross Colombo Show, the Ocean Pops, the Essex County Summer Players, the Union Symphony Orchestra and the Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament. His experience also includes performances in many musical theater productions, among them *Anything Goes*, *Crazy for You*, *How to Succeed in Business*, *Annie*, *West Side Story*, *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Oliver*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, *The Music Man*, *Grease*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *Carousel*.

Among his professional memberships are those in the Music Educators' National Conference and the International Association of Jazz Educators.

The Music Studio offers private vocal and instrumental music lessons for children as well as adults at two Westfield locations: 150-152 East Broad Street and 361 South Avenue East. It also offers areas musicians an opportunity to play in various ensembles, bands and orchestras.

For more information on the Music Studio or other NJWA programs, call (908) 789-9696 or visit the main office on East Broad Street.

Think safety when shopping

ELIZABETH — The Union County Office of Consumer Affairs recommends that parents shopping for toys should first read the age and safety labels. The federal Child Safety Protection act states that warning labels on toys must be clear, noticeable and placed on the portion of the package most visible from the store shelf.

The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System estimates 206,500 people were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for toy related injuries last year. Thirty-four percent were to children under age 5.

Parents should make sure the toy is constructed well, small parts are secured tightly so they won't break off and there are no sharp edges. Also, parents should avoid purchasing toys with parts that can be shot or propelled or that make loud noise that can damage a child's hearing. Balls and building blocks should be at least 1 1/4 inches in diameter and strings should be no longer than six inches to prevent strangulation.

And more children have suffocated on deflated balloons than any other type of toy. For more information, contact the Union County Office of Consumer Affairs at (908) 654-9840.

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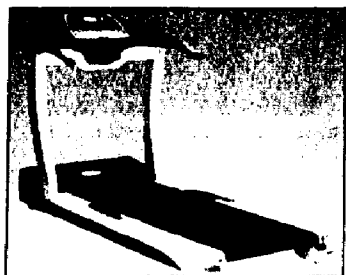


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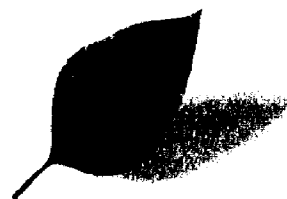
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Real Estate

Preparing to sell a home? Take these tips into account

(ARA) — Between 2002 and 2003, more than 14 percent of the U.S. population changed dwellings. The most common reason for moving was the need for more space (43 percent).

When you decide to put your house on the market, it's important that you present a spacious, clean living space in which prospective buyers can imagine themselves living.

A new web site from The Home Depot, www.homedepotmoving.com, offers some general tips for preparing your house for sale and suggests taking a look at nine key areas when preparing your home to show prospec-

tive buyers. More tips on preparing your home for sale, including information on the return on investment (ROI) you can expect for various home improvements, can be found on the new web site as well.

General Tips

- Clean everything thoroughly.
- Put out clean towels, new soap, a nice tablecloth and fresh flowers.
- Don't be at home during a showing or open house. If you do stay, be polite, but let your real estate agent do the talking.
- Don't apologize for the condition of your home.

— Make sure your kids and pets are out of the house.

— Eliminate clutter from all areas of your home to create an impression of spaciousness and plentiful storage space.

— Nothing makes a home look new more quickly than a fresh coat of paint. Neutral colors suggest newness and cleanliness.

Nine Key Areas for Consideration

Storage. One of the first things a buyer looks at in a home is the storage it offers. A general rule of thumb for sellers is to take out half of what's in

the closets and storage areas to make them look more spacious. Remove excess furniture to make rooms seem as spacious as possible. Consider throwing out, donating, selling or storing things you no longer want. Make sure that storage areas in your basement, attic or garage also are well organized, thus giving prospective buyers the impression that there is room for all of their belongings.

Kitchen. Ask homebuyers what area or room of the home they consider most important, and chances are they'll say the kitchen. When prospective buyers look at your kitchen, they will pay particular attention to its cleanliness, layout and storage capacity. If major appliances are being sold with the home, make sure they are spotless, odor-free and in good working condition. Polish chrome surfaces and fix any leaky faucets, loose cabinet hardware, drawer handles and outdated or inefficient light fixtures. Make more efficient use of drawers and cabinets with dividers and cutlery trays.

Walls. Repair any cracks or holes in the walls and ceiling and repaint if necessary. Strip outdated wallpaper.

Windows. Clean interior and exterior windows and screens. Repair cracked panes, torn screens, broken sashes and ropes or cords as well. When your home is being shown, open your curtains to let daylight in, especially if the view is noteworthy. While you're at it, wash all the mirrors in the house too, and launder or dry-clean your curtains and drapes.

Floors. Carpeting has a major impact on the look of a home. Prior to

showing your home to prospective buyers, vacuum thoroughly or have carpets steam-cleaned. If the carpet is badly worn, outdated or stained, consider having it replaced despite the expense. Check wood floors to see if they need to be refinished. Scrub and wax tile floors and repair or replace cracked tiles.

Lighting. Make sure light fixtures, switches, switchplates and outlet covers are clean and in good working order.

Paint. It's true that first impressions are often lasting so take a good look at the paint on the outside of your house. Is it cracking, peeling or chipping? If it is, a fresh coat for your exterior may cost you a bit of time and money but may elevate your home from "fixer-upper" to "move-in condition." If you decide your home needs painting, choose colors that are appropriate for the style of your home and that blend in well with your neighborhood.

Roof. Buyers will pay close attention to the condition of your roof. You should re-patch or re-shingle where necessary, and fix leaky, corroded downspouts and gutters. Inside, a watermarked ceiling is a sign to buyers that the roof has leaked — even if the damage has been repaired.

Entry. A neat and clean entryway creates a positive first impression, and a freshly painted door and trim with sturdy hardware add a welcome touch. Replace faded house numbers with new ones. Make sure the doorbell is in working order.

This article is published courtesy of ARA Content.

Want to keep your home at its best? Don't neglect regular maintenance

(ARA) — Just like our automobiles, our homes need routine maintenance to perform at their best. And, unlike automobiles which depreciate in value over time, investing in your home is often the best investment you can make, since homes often substantially appreciate in value.

Through proactive home maintenance, homeowners can help reduce energy costs, keep their families more comfortable and help their investment perform at its best.

"Your home is a major investment in money and in time," says Kathy Krafka Harkema, Pella Corporation spokesperson. "Energy costs are continuing to rise, so it makes sense to check your home and eliminate energy inefficiencies. Completing a few small home improvement projects now can help provide greater comfort and safety and lasting value for years to come."

Follow these tips to keep your home in good working order:

— Mechanical systems such as furnaces and air conditioners require regular safety and maintenance checks to perform at their peak. Have these systems inspected at least annually by a qualified professional. Change filters regularly and consider using allergen-reducing filters if family members suffer from dust allergies or a smoker resides in the house.

— If your furnace is equipped with a humidifier, make sure it is appropriately set for your region's conditions and for the season. Too much moisture can damage the home's structure and furnishings. Too little moisture can cause wood furniture to crack and windows and doors to stick. No matter when the home was built, the key is to strike the right balance when it comes to humidity levels. Though moisture is present in every home, excessive levels should be addressed. Adjust humidity levels inside the home throughout the year to avoid moisture build up and damage. If interior condensation begins to form on your windows, reduce interior humidity by opening windows, running exhaust fans or humidifiers, or minimizing sources of moisture. For a chart of recommended relative humidity levels inside the home, visit <http://www.pella.com/maint/condensation.asp?path=/main/tcond>.

— Look for dripping pipes and faucets. Repairing or replacing faulty plumbing parts can save hundreds of dollars in extra, needless water charges, as well as more costly repairs in the future due to water damage.

— Be sure chimneys are free and clear of ash and soot. This not only could prevent a fire, but also ensures that moisture in combustion gases can escape. To locate a qualified chimney sweep in your area, visit the Chimney Safety Institute of America Web site at www.csiia.org.

— Check the manufacturer's recommendations for properly venting gas appliances. In most cases, this means venting directly to the outdoors. If you cannot locate your owner's manual, check the manufacturer's web site for the information.

— Look closely at exterior surfaces for cracking, deteriorated wood and other damage that might be caused by condensation or water penetration. Re-caulk around windows and doors where necessary. Also, check for cracked and peeling paint on windows and doors. This could signal that it's time for replacement. If it's time to replace, select energy-efficient products, such as those earning the ENERGY STAR for added performance and comfort all year.

— Poorly installed windows and doors won't perform efficiently, or last as long as they should, no matter how well they're built. Whether you install it yourself, or hire someone else to do it for you, make sure the manufacturer's installation instructions are followed to ensure products perform and will comply with warranty terms.

— Take the time to test and replace smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Make sure that smoke alarms are installed on every floor of your home, near key rooms, such as bedrooms. To help protect your home and your personal safety, replace smoke alarms every 10 years, unless they are hard-wired into your home's electrical system. Practice your family's fire escape plan to ensure everyone can exit easily and safely in case of fire. Identify two exits from every room: a door and a window. Make sure your home's doors and windows open quickly and easily, and keep paths to them free of clutter to ensure a quick exit if needed.

Completing these simple tips each year will help keep your family and your investment in your home safe and warm all winter long.

For home maintenance tips, visit Pella Corporation at <http://www.pella.com/maint/default.asp> or call (888) 84-PELLA. To learn more about energy efficiency visit www.energystar.gov.

This article is published courtesy of ARA Content.

It's important to be educated before making a deal

(ARA) — From home makeover shows to Do-It-Yourself stores and countless design and remodeling magazines, Americans are equipped with the latest information and trends in home improvement. While these resources provide valuable advice when remodeling your house, homeowners should be just as knowledgeable about their options when buying and selling a home.

There are a number of variables to consider when putting your house on the market or purchasing a new home. For consumers, there are several tools to help you make the right decision. Equifax Home Valuator is a tool designed to give consumers easy access to information such as high and low property value ranges, neighborhood comparables and property record information, when available.

You may think that overpricing and letting interested buyers make an offer is an effective strategy, but this approach can backfire. If the home is overpriced, potential buyers looking in a lower price range may never see it. Furthermore, stagnant houses in the market take much longer to sell. On the other hand, when purchasing a new home, how do you know if you're getting a good deal? Is it a bargain? Is the home over-priced for the neighborhood?

Knowing the factors that can impact the buying and selling process and understanding the value of your home can eliminate any guesswork and help you

negotiate an optimal price.

Here are a few tips to consider when you are ready to buy or sell.

— Be prepared for your purchase.

Spend time analyzing your budget and finances to determine how much home you can comfortably afford. Once you've made your decision, try to be conservative with your spending a few months before entering into the home buying or selling process to accommodate unexpected initial expenses. Also, be mindful of your credit score. Make a conscious effort to monitor it and take the appropriate steps to improve it, if necessary, in order to take full advantage of better interest rates afforded to those with good credit.

— Research your agent.

The relationship between a home buyer/seller and a real estate agent requires the same give and take as needed in a marriage. To succeed, the relationship must be based on trust and an understanding of mutual goals. Before you hire an agent, home buyers and sellers should learn as much as possible about the process. For example, asking the right questions can help ensure that the agent is familiar with the target area. It's also helpful to confirm the agent's average sales volume and whether they typically work with buyers or sellers. Taking the time to do your research can save you money down the road.

— Use your head, not your heart.

Whether buying or selling, don't let emotions cloud your

judgment. Assess any emotional ties you might have to a current or prospective home and ensure that personal feelings are not guiding your decisions. For example, even if you've found your dream home, does it suit your needs, can you afford it, and is it worth the asking price?

— Be precise.

Whether you're a first-time home buyer or a seasoned home owner, you can

strengthen your negotiating power with an accurate and unbiased assessment of your home's value. Tools such as Equifax Home Valuator can improve your knowledge when negotiating an optimal buying or selling price. For more information, visit www.equifax.com.

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30-yr. Fixed	5.375	0.00	5%	30	5.410	30-yr. Fixed	5.000	1.63	5%	30	5.269	30-yr. Fixed	5.375	0.00	30%	30	5.310	15-yr. Fixed	5.000	0.00	5%		5.060
15-yr. Fixed	4.750	0.00	5%	30	4.810	15-yr. Fixed	4.500	1.13	5%	30	4.529	20-yr. Fixed	5.250	0.00	30%	30	5.060	30-yr. ARM	4.250	0.00	5%		4.720
30-yr. Jumbo	5.625	0.00	5%	30	5.690	30-yr. Jumbo	5.625	0.00	5%	30	5.629	15-yr. ARM	4.750	0.00	30%	30	4.690	5/1/30 ARM	4.375	0.00	5%		4.375
5/1 ARM	4.500	0.00	5%	30	4.520	5/1 ARM	4.250	1.25	5%	30	4.259	30-yr. Jumbo	5.625	0.00	30%	30	5.690	5/5/30 ARM	4.375	0.00	5%		4.375
3/1 ARM	4.250	0.00	5%	30	4.270													7/1/30 ARM	4.750	0.00	5%		5.085
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30-yr. Fixed	4.875	2.00	5%	30	5.129	30-yr. Fixed	5.750	0.00	5%	90	5.759	30-yr. Fixed	5.500	0.00	5%	30	5.530	30-yr. Fixed	5.750	0.00	20%	75	5.795
15-yr. Fixed	4.250	2.00	5%	30	4.682	30-yr. Jumbo	5.750	0.00	20%	90	5.759	15-yr. Fixed	5.000	0.00	5%	30	5.030	15-yr. Fixed	4.750	0.00	20%	75	4.811
30-yr. Jumbo	5.250	1.00	5%	30	5.541	15-yr. ARM	5.000	0.00	5%	90	5.015	10-yr. Fixed	4.500	0.00	5%	30	4.570	10-yr. Fixed	4.500	0.00	20%	75	4.582
15-yr. Jumbo	4.500	2.00	5%	30	4.859	5-yr. ARM	4.500	0.00	5%	90	4.900	5/1 ARM	4.875	0.00	5%	30	4.870	10-yr. Fixed	3.875	2.00	20%	75	4.375
<small>1.25% loans, 100% financing. Jumbo loan specialists, weekend hours, 100% stated, 100% investment.</small>						<small>Conforming loans to 95% LTV. Loans to \$2.5 Million</small>						<small>30-yr. Jumbo</small>	5.750	0.00	5%	30	5.800	<small>10-yr, 15-yr and 1-yr ARM to \$500,000 depending on downpayment. 60 day commitment. Lock-in at application.</small>					
A Custom Mortgage Sol. 800-259-9510						Lighthouse Mortgage 800-784-1331						Partners Mortgage 888-RATE-SALE						Check mortgage rates daily at:					
30-yr. Fixed	5.000	1.50	5%	30	5.160	30-yr. Fixed	5.375	0.00	5%	30	5.369	30-yr. Fixed	5.125	2.00	5%	60	5.170	nj.com					
15-yr. Fixed	5.250	0.25	5%	30	5.350	15-yr. Fixed	4.750	0.00	5%	30	4.869	15-yr. Fixed	4.500	2.00	5%	60	4.540	<small>Updated 3:00pm Monday thru Friday</small>					
15-yr. Jumbo	4.375	1.50	5%	30	4.790	10-yr. Fixed	4.500	0.00	5%	30	4.588	30-yr. Jumbo	5.375	2.00	5%	60	5.420	Everything Jersey					
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15-yr. Fixed	4.875	0.00	5%	60	4.890	15-yr. Fixed	4.750	0.00	5%	90	4.811	15-yr. ARM	5.000	0.00	5%	90	5.120						
30-yr. Jumbo	5.625	0.00	5%	60	5.660	7/1 ARM Jbo	4.875	0.00	10%	90	5.085	15/30 balloon	5.500	0.00	5%	90	5.592						
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mother. Oh holy Mary,
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heaven & earth I humbly
beseech you from the bot-
tom of my heart to sup-
port me in this necessity.
There are none that can
withstand your power. Oh
show me herein, you are
my mother. Oh Mary, con-
ceived without sin, pray
for us who have recourse
to thee. Holy mother, I
place this cause in your
hands. XXX Holy Spirit,
you who solve all prob-
lems, light all roads so
that I can attain my goal.
You who give me the di-
vine gift to forgive & forget
all evil against me & that
in all instances in my life
you are with me. I want
in this short prayer to thank
you for things as you con-
firm once again that I
never want to be sepa-
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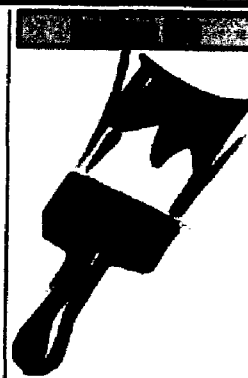
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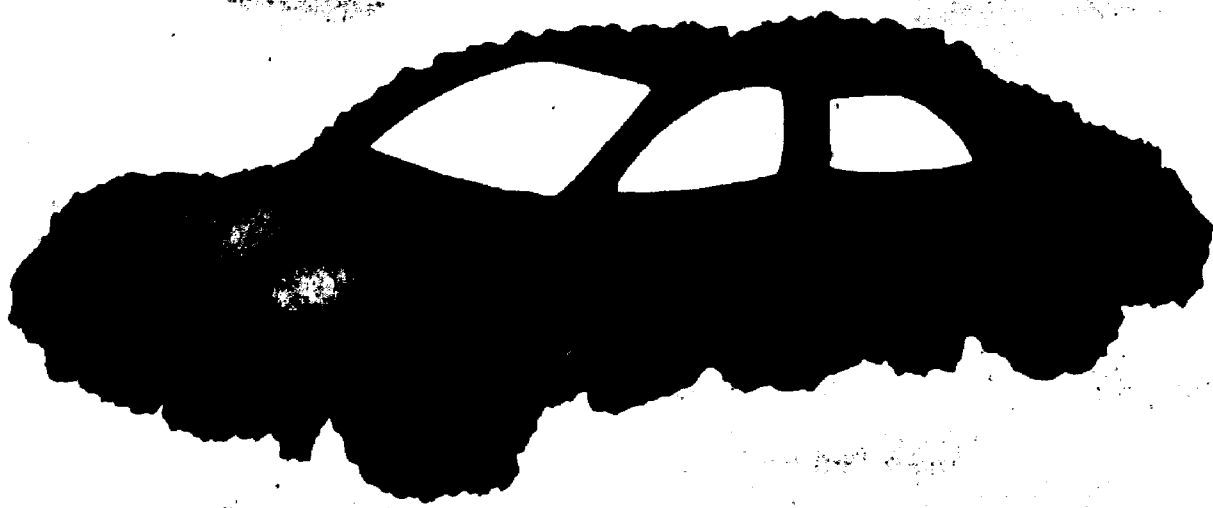
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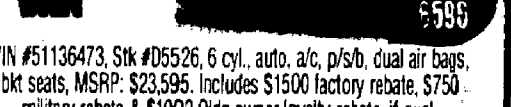


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