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BELLEVILLE'S BEST-SELLING WEEKLY

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2008

No rise in school taxes

More state aid means less needed from local sources

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New tax assessor takes the reigns

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Man pleads guilty to donut shop robberies

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Colon gets first title

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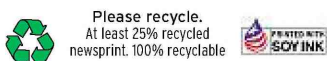


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Vol. 98 No. 20

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LOOKING AHEAD

School counselor Bea Grossberg is seen here assisting senior Cedric Hall during a college night held at Belleville High School earlier this week.

Belleville rated among state's best towns

BY DAVID HINRICHS
of Belleville Times

There are 566 municipalities in New Jersey and this year, Belleville can call itself one of the best.

A recent study done by New Jersey Monthly Magazine compared all the municipalities in the state against each other and named the top 100. Belleville ranked 80th. "I was extremely pleased when I read this. This is a great recognition for this town and it shows what this council is capable of when everyone works together as we have for the past two years," said Belleville Mayor Ray Kimble. "This will hopefully have a positive impact on the town and the image we have with the public. People can read this and see that this is a town on the rise and a place where good things are happening."

The list of top towns in the state was compiled by a team of researchers at Monmouth University's Polling Institute and the towns were graded by eight main categories that they felt best represented the quality of life in New Jersey. Property taxes, home values, population growth, land development, employment rate, crime rate, school performance and proximity to services such as

hospitals, movie theaters and hotels. The number one town in the state is Chatham Township in Morris County. "New Jersey Monthly has been doing this for years and this is the first time ever that Belleville has made the list. As a council, we are very proud of this and it is evidence that we are indeed doing our jobs," said Belleville Deputy Mayor John Notari. "This is a tribute to this council, our mayor, our town manager and our great residents. This is a list I have been reading for many years and to see Belleville placed on it gives me great joy."

Many changes have been made in Belleville over the past two years and Notari believes that these changes are the kind of things that got Belleville recognized. "We have updated our fields and playgrounds, modified our town budgets and paved our roads. I know in my ward alone we have had 14 roads paved," said Notari.

Township Manager Victor Canning was very surprised and delighted by the news. "I have been in this town a while but I have never seen something like this. This is an absolute honor for everyone from the mayor on down," said Canning. "We are

straightening things up around here and it is beginning to show. This is a great accomplishment for the town but there is still much to do."

Canning and Notari both alluded to many more projects that are on the horizon for the township. "We are starting up the Washington Ave clean-up project to restore and revitalize the street with businesses. We have expanded the parking lot at Town Hall, purchased properties around town and implemented ordinances to enforce cleaner businesses and appearances," said Canning. "These kind of initiatives are going to bring people back into this town and give them the desire to invest in us as we invest in them."

Notari believes that the impact of placing inside the coveted top 100 list will give Belleville a boost in both economics and pride. "I think people will read this and realize that they do live in a great town and that Belleville can be as good as anywhere else. We have two major developments coming including the Lowe's Department store and there are a lot of other things we have in the works that we want to get off the ground," said Notari. "Hopefully this council will be given a chance to continue working together and

improving this town."

Notari has seen what landing on this list can do for other towns and he hopes Belleville enjoys the same results. "I have friends who live in other towns where after they made the list, a surge in real estate value was experienced and I believe that will come to Belleville," said Notari. "This can only be a good thing for us and it is a list we want to remain on for years to come."

Canning agreed with Notari and believes that the best is yet to come. "Many areas around Belleville have become overpopulated. We did not quite catch on with the real estate boom that hit a few years back and I think that we are now going to experience some great times. We have a lot of buying potential and there are opportunities present in Belleville for people to move in here and make money," said Canning. "Making this list will alert people of our growth and people may now look here first to start a business or a family."

The list has been published in the March issue of New Jersey Monthly Magazine and can also be viewed online at www.njmonthly.com.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2008 BELLEVILLE TIMES

March 2
■ Police arrested and charged Willfredo Valle, 28, of Newark with shoplifting at 12:22 p.m. The suspect was detained trying to leave the Pathmark, 115 Belmont Ave. with several items of deodorant and toothpaste. Bail was set at \$200. The suspect had three outstanding warrants out of Newark totaling \$550.

March 1
■ A theft was reported from the Pathmark, 115 Belmont Ave. at 10:01 p.m. An employee in the bakery department reported that their wallet, containing several credit cards, identification and \$19 in cash had been stolen. Police are investigating.

Feb. 29
■ A white 1997 Acura Integra

was reported stolen near Magnolia Street and Newark Avenue at 5:13 p.m. The vehicle has not been recovered.

Feb. 28
■ A victim reported a dog bite in the 220 block of Cortlandt Street at 8:50 p.m. The victim reported the neighbor's small dog bit him on the left shin while he was talking to the neighbor. He sustained a small cut.

■ Police arrested Steven Morgan, 48, of Passaic shortly after he was released from the Passaic County Jail. He had an outstanding \$500 warrant from Belleville, along with a \$125 outstanding warrant from Newark and a \$167 outstanding warrant from Ridgefield.

Feb. 27
■ Police arrested and charged Antonio Laracuenta, 28, of Kearny with being a disorderly person at 4:01 a.m. The suspect was approached by police after he was observed banging on the door of a room at the Belleville Motor Lodge, 371 Washington Ave. He yelled at police, "F*** you racists, you're arresting me because I'm Hispanic." He then continued to argue with his girlfriend in the room. She asked that he leave, he refused and was arrested. He was released on his own recognizance on the Belleville charge and was given over to North Arlington Police on a \$150 outstanding warrant.

■ An incident of criminal mischief was reported to a 2008 Mus-

tang located at Elite Ford, 645 Washington Ave., at 11:02 a.m. An employee said someone had scratched the driver side door and front panel with a key. Police are investigating.

■ A strong arm robbery was reported at 9:12 p.m. near Belleville Avenue and Branch Brook Drive. The victim said they were walking back from a convenience store on Columbus Avenue with lottery tickets and candy. Two black males then approached the victim from behind, with one choking the victim and the other taking the bag with lottery tickets and candy. The victim was then punched in the face before the two black males fled. Police are investigating.

■ Police arrested and charged

Adalberto Arroyo, 40, of Newark with robbery and hindering arrest at 6:43 p.m. The suspect was stopped trying to leave the K-Mart, 371 Main St. with concealed condoms, razors, Smuckers jam and Pepto Bismol. The suspect had to be forcibly detained. Bail was \$200. He had outstanding warrants totaling \$850 from Newark, and three warrants totaling \$450 from Kearny.

Editor's note: Police news is compiled from information provided by the police department. The information is released to the press at the discretion of the department and may not represent the total scope of police activity. Accounts that indicate charges pending against an individual do not imply guilt or innocence.

Local man pleads guilty in string of donut shop robberies

BY KIBRET MARKOS
for Belleville Times

A Belleville man admitted on Feb. 25 that he robbed several Dunkin' Donuts shops and convenience stores in Bergen and Essex

counties.

Joseph Sweeney, 25, told a Superior Court Judge in Hackensack that he was armed with a knife and a toy gun when he held up stores in Garfield, Rutherford, Lodi, Paramus, Emerson, Carlstadt

and Nutley.

Sweeney, who came to court wearing an orange jumpsuit, pleaded guilty to seven counts of armed robbery and agreed to receive up to 13 years in prison when he is sentenced April 11. He must serve at least 85 percent of his sentence.

Had Sweeney been convicted at trial, he could have received anywhere from 70 to 140 years for seven counts of armed robbery stemming from seven separate incidents.

Sweeney said little during the

brief hearing other than answering questions from Doyle and from Superior Court Judge Harry G. Carroll.

After hitting seven stores in a span of three weeks in December 2006 and January 2007, Sweeney was arrested while staking out his next target, authorities said at the time.

Expecting that the robber would make another visit to a local Dunkin' Donuts, detectives were watching a store on Forest Avenue in Paramus on Jan. 20, 2007, when

they noticed Sweeney sitting in a Dodge Intrepid in the parking lot, authorities said.

Sweeney fit the robber's description, and his car had no license plates, they said.

After seeing police, Sweeney left the parking lot, and the detectives followed him, police said. Sweeney then led police on a brief chase on Route 17 and the Garden State Parkway before he was stopped and arrested near Exit 155, they said.

Police also said that, along with a cup of Dunkin' Donuts coffee on the dashboard, they seized binoculars, a knife and a ski mask from Sweeney.

Markos is a staff writer for The Record.

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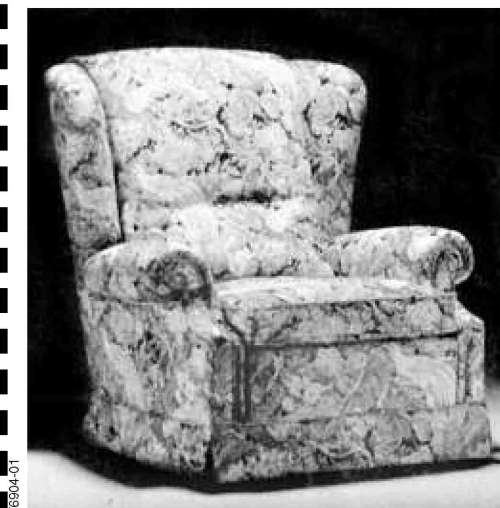
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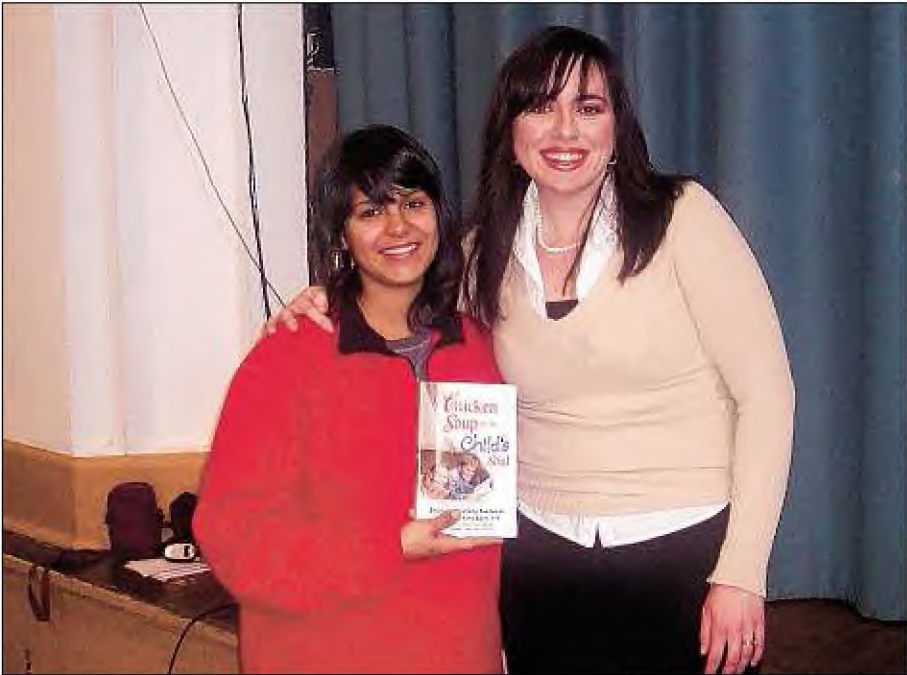
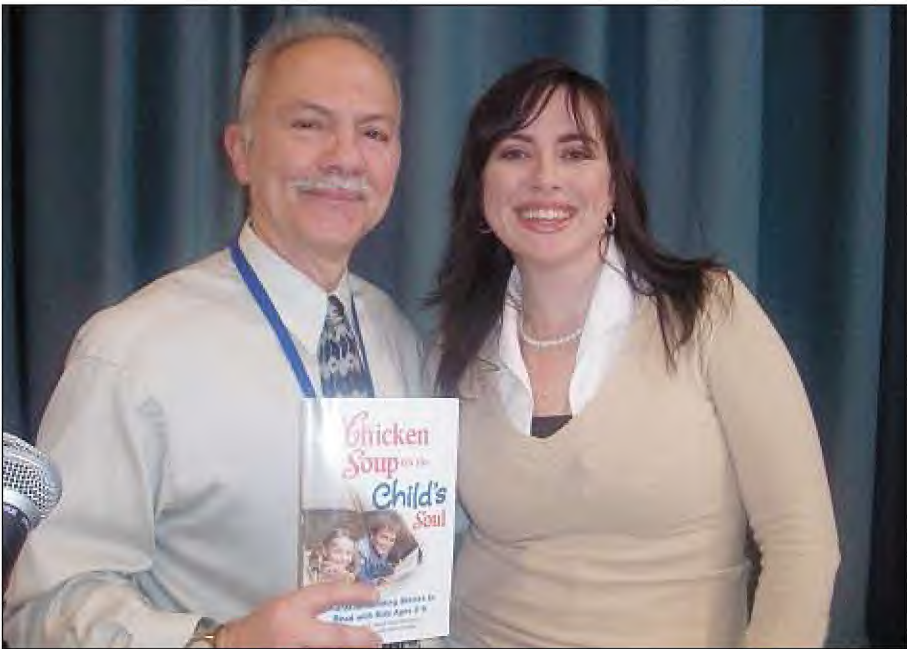
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PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCHOOL 5

(Above and top left) Author Tiffany O'Neill, who resides in Bloomfield, recently attended an assembly for the students of School No. 5. Her presentation included a reading of her story "Christmas for Opal and Sean", which has been published in the book *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul*. The school's children's book author assemblies are an ongoing project, conceived and coordinated by PTA parent Marilyn Montijo in an effort to instill in students the desire to read as well as to inspire them to try writing something of their own.



On February 12, students in Miss Rudnicki's first grade class at School 5 celebrated the 100th day of school. Leading up to the special day, they all worked together to create a paper link chain consisting of 100 strips of paper which is hung outside the classroom. The students also made paper crowns to wear that said "I am 100 days smarter!" Pictured (middle photo, right) is Crystal Vaquero, above is Luis Angel Matos and at right is Tiana Machado.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BELLEVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Belleville Middle School Science Club, under the direction of BMS science teacher Peter Ayala, held their annual Paper Airplane Challenge. The students were required to build and then fly their own paper airplane creations. The winner was determined by the distance the airplane traveled. The winner for this year's contest was BMS 8th grader Pedro Trindade. Pedro was awarded a Barnes and Noble gift certificate for his winning effort. From left, BMS Principal Carmine Guinta, Pedro Trindade with his winning airplane, and BMS Science Club Advisor Peter Ayala.



A feather in town's cap, courtesy of magazine

New Jersey Monthly, a lifestyle magazine, annually compiles a list of the 100 most desirable communities in the state, and for the first time that anyone can remember, Belleville is on that list. Everyone in the township should be proud of this recognition, and should think about the factors that helped get the township on the list.

One of these involves the crime rate - so hats off to the Belleville Police Department, whose diligence has kept the township safe and secure despite its proximity to a community with a very high crime rate, Newark. Belleville never would have made this list if it wasn't a safe place to raise kids.

Nor would Belleville have made the list if its

schools were not up to par, another factor employed in determining a given community's ranking on the list. School officials face the challenge of serving a community of students that include many who struggle. At the same time, however, the public schools also do right by the district's most capable academic achievers - as evidenced by Belleville's highly successful gifted and talented program. It's no coincidence that Belleville High's senior class this year includes a few kids who are bound for Ivy League and other elite colleges.

The township also gets points for having a relatively favorable tax rate. Many residents may be dubious about this - and rightfully so - because

property taxes in this town are punishing. But then again, compared with the rest of the state, Belleville holds up fairly well. That at least in part can be attributed to the work of the council, which has worked to get more commercial development into the community - a boon from a tax perspective because large businesses usually pay more in taxes than they require in services.

All in all, everyone has a right to be proud. Now the challenge is to sustain and improve on this achievement - Belleville ranked 80th on the list, a respectable figure but one that also leaves room for more advances.

LETTERS

My hero, my brother

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing this letter in response to the letter from Barbara Hahn printed in the February 14, 2008 issue of The Belleville Times.

I thank you for putting into words so eloquently your thoughts and heartfelt feelings about my beloved brother, Ed Heimrich. Yes, he is truly a fallen hero, but he'll always remain my hero.

I remember so well that day in June 1951, when my family received the telegram from the War Dept.; it was the day of my high school graduation. That day will remain etched in my memory forever.

I could go on forever about my brother and the role model he was for me. He'll live on forever in my heart.

Thank you Barbara for your expressive, heart-warming letter.

Doris Knoeller (Heimrich)
Verona

Defending their candidate

TO THE EDITOR:

My husband and I were astonished by the Cornell's demeaning letter about Ralph Vellon. The Cornell's letter attempted to defame Ralph Vellon's character. I say attempted, because it certainly takes more than that pathetic letter to smear the reputation that Mr. Vellon has built within our community.

When Ralph Vellon is elected to the BOE, we can be assured that he will work for the best interest of the children. Mr. Vellon will also work with people like the Cornells, as well as with every member of the community.

We need leaders like Mr. Vellon who are strong, kind and forgiving. We need leadership that will listen to all sides before jumping to conclusions; we need leaders that hold in their hearts the best interest of our children and not their own personal agenda. Ralph Vellon represents that ideal leadership.

Mr. Vellon has also served on several boards; handled multimillion dollar budgets; been involved in expansion projects. Mr. Vellon coached for the Belleville Recreational Department. Mr. Vellon initiated Father's Pride program at School # 5. The BOE will benefit from Mr. Vellon's work ethic, knowledge and experience. Children will benefit knowing that they have someone in the BOE working for a better Belleville, better schools.

Mr. Vellon believes that our community is polarized by a philosophy of revenge, anger, isolation, and disunity. The voter turnout demonstrates apathy among voters. A small percentage of voters decide the future of our children. Mr. Vellon has the "nerve" to want to change this philosophy. It takes vision and courage to take on such a challenge. He has our vote and I am certain if the Cornell's knew Mr. Vellon, they too would vote for him.

The Ariza family

TO THE EDITOR:

The letter addressed to you on February 21st about the candidacy of Ralph Vellon for the board of education shows a great deal of anxiety, hostility and ignorance toward an individual that is truly trying to do what is best for our children. The Cornells questioned the "nerve" of Mr. Vellon and questioned his ability to lead in our board of education. While we don't deny the fact that this is Mr. Vellon's first campaign, we find very interesting the antidemocrat-

ic spirit of the Cornells. We are all guaranteed under our Constitution the right to run for office if we feel that we can do a better job. We also find peculiar the necessity of the Cornells to use such hostile language to describe Mr. Vellon's intentions and abilities. This led us to ask, are the Cornells truly voicing their own opinion? Or are they simply parroting the anxiety of other interested parties who see a strong contender?

Rogelio Suarez

TO THE EDITOR:

I disagree with the Cornells. Let me explain. I recall the presence of Mr. Ralph Vellon at the public Board of Education meetings further back than seven months as Mr. Cornell is alleging. Ralph was present during the discussions for school uniforms. Mr. Vellon has been working with educational district leaders long before he decided to run. In 2006, I was part of meeting with Dr. Babo, Dr. Palmeri, Dennis Villano and several members from the Hispanic community at the Solar Do Minhos to discuss issues which confront our community and to search for ways to address them. Mr. Ralph Vellon brought many views and was able to articulate his views in a manner which brought him attention and the respect of all those present. His opinions are worthy of our time. During this meeting we discussed the void of the Hispanic point of view at the board and in our community.

I find Mr. Ralph Vellon's vision for the school district refreshing and long overdue. Perhaps what the Cornell's are afraid of is what he represents. The community has a large number of Hispanics and they may be afraid of where he is from. "He should go back to the PTO...where the people appreciate him most", stated the Cornell letter. The reason he is

appreciated is because we know him. We know what he stands for and how effective he can be. He brings a warm and genuine personality to all who would speak with him. The support he has been generating from all ethnic groups within our community is reflective of his genuine concern for all of the children. Mr. Vellon may not have the support of the Cornells but if you knew him you would support him. Be strong Ralph, you can win!

Rene Toledo

Marines need new HQ

TO THE EDITOR:

We are the Marine Corps League Air Land Sea Detachment 710, 160 Park Ave Nutley. We have been in existence since 1995. We number 60 young and senior Marine members. We have served our country in World War II (Iwo Jima), Korea (Chosin Reservoir), Vietnam, Iraq and also in non-combat zone throughout the world. At present, we reside and hold our monthly meetings in a commercial building in Nutley. In a short time, we will lose our small memorabilia filled quarters. We thank and

salute the building owner for giving us many years rent free, but with current renovations, he has a paying client who needs our space.

Our meetings allow us time to share with fellow Marines, plan fund raisers that benefit wounded Marines, scholarships and a host of other veteran programs. We run a "Toys for Tots" campaign through the USMC Reserve and participate in award ceremonies for Eagle Scouts. We parade in local towns and have a color guard that performs at Veteran Day functions.

Rented space, unless very reasonable, is not an option. We would like a place of our own. Our minimum space requirement is 500 square feet. We are proud and few. We are Marines! We can adapt, improvise and overcome, but we sure could use some aid in our ongoing process of finding a new home! Can you help us? We'd make you an honorary member!

Contact Commandant Roger Maccanano 973-661-3639. Semper Fi.

Kent Miller
Nutley

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 5

CORRECTION

The little girl appearing on the cover of last week's edition was misidentified. Her name is Aliyah Jones and she's six years old.

Letters to the Editor policy

Letters may be edited and may be published, reproduced, or distributed in print, electronic, or other forms. The views and opinions expressed in letters to the editor are not necessarily those of *Belleville Times* or its affiliates. Submissions should be typed and double-spaced, and include a daytime phone number for verification. Letters that cannot be verified or are anonymous will not be published. Not all letters will necessarily be published. Please e-mail letters to the editor to bellevilletimes@northjersey.com or mail letters to Belleville Times, 90 Centre St., Nutley, N.J. 07110 or fax letters to 973-667-3904.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 4

Her hat is in the ring

TO THE EDITOR:

With the support and encouragement of friends and residents of the First Ward, I submit my candidacy for re-election to the Belleville Township Council as its First Ward Representative.

For over thirty years, I have served my neighbors and our town. I co-founded the Silver Lake Civic Association with over 200 members and was instrumental in bringing back St. Anthony's Feast. I supported and helped institute Neighborhood Maintenance Inspectors to improve the cleanliness of our neighborhoods and to improve the quality of life for citizens of the First Ward.

As the First Ward Council Member, I sponsored an ordinance to the Belleville Township Council that now enables the town to collect water and sewer connection fees from all new development projects that require water and sewer connections. As a result of this ordinance, approximately \$300,000 in revenues has been generated. In the past that financial burden fell on the existing taxpayers.

For my years of loyal dedication and civic leadership, I was awarded the Silver Card, the highest civilian award from the Belleville PBA Local #28, for support of police and civic

involvement.

For the past four years, I have served as your First Ward Councilwoman. I have worked hard to improve our ward and our town. I along with Freeholder Ralph Caputo, helped rid our Township of slum landlords. Audubon Place is certainly an improvement over the filthy and run down Branch Brook Gardens. I will continue the battle with out-of-town landlords who are ruining our neighborhoods with illegal apartments and overcrowded dwellings causing health and safety violations. To improve safety in our neighborhoods, I recently introduced a curfew ordinance for minors. I was instrumental in obtaining first aid equipment for our CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and proposed and succeeded in installing cardiac defibrillators in all police post cars. Town Hall and the Police Command Center.

To improve our quality of life and to build community spirit, I organized the "JUST A PARTY" event. With the support of local

businesses and community organizations, we provide an enjoyable evening for thousands of Belleville children and adults. Through community awareness, plans are underway to install in the Soho Section of the First Ward, a "Sitting Park" on the corner of Mill and Harrison Street.

I am concerned about the future of our town; therefore, I will always be there to support our children. The children are our future. I would appreciate your support of my candidacy for re-election to the Belleville Township Council.

Marie Strumolo Burke

Better the second time around

TO THE EDITOR:

Recycling is the one way we as residents have a direct impact on saving tax dollars.

Over the last 4 years I have spent time serving on the Solid Waste Advisory Council (SWAC). This was done in an effort to find ways for Belleville to save tax dollars and energy by recycling. Tax dollars are saved by reducing the tipping fees we

pay for garbage disposal. Recycling aluminum alone saves 95 percent of the energy required to extract and process aluminum from bauxite.

Newsletters have been published and articles placed in our local newspapers to promote this effort. Many of our residents have responded positively. Our recycling efforts are getting better. However, we have not yet reached our goal of 50 percent recycling. In order for us to meet our goals as set forth by the State of New Jersey and Essex County Solid Waste Plans, we must

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 8

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Esposito signs on as township's new tax assessor

BY DAVID HINRICHS
of Belleville Times

New Belleville tax assessor Kevin Esposito, who was officially hired on January 3rd, has put together a plan with the assistance of Township Manager Victor Canning and the township council to upgrade most of the technology at town hall. "The assessor's office has kind of been behind the times. Kevin wants to buy new software that will allow us to do a lot of things we could not in the past," said Canning. "He is a very technologically driven person and I believe his suggestions for the direction we should go in will be extremely beneficial for his work and the residents."

Currently, the computers in the office right now operate with the Windows 95 operating system, one of the many things Esposito wants to change. "Ultimately, I want to upgrade the majority of the technology in my office. Being someone that embraces technology, I believe it will help me do my job tremendously and I can better serve the community with the appropriate tools," said Esposito.

The first thing Esposito would like to do is replace the computer systems. "There is a new Tablet PC that is currently being offered to assessors that I would like to bring

to Belleville. This computer would allow me to make changes on the revaluation from anywhere on the face of the planet," said Esposito. "An example would be that if I was out on an inspection at a homeowner's property I could do the report right there alongside the homeowner without ever having to go to my office."

Esposito works on Tuesdays and Wednesday s from his office in Town Hall but also does some work throughout the week at his private office and is right now scheduled to be the interim tax assessor till May. He is under salary at the same rate the retiring assessor was designated at and makes \$3,977.58 a month.

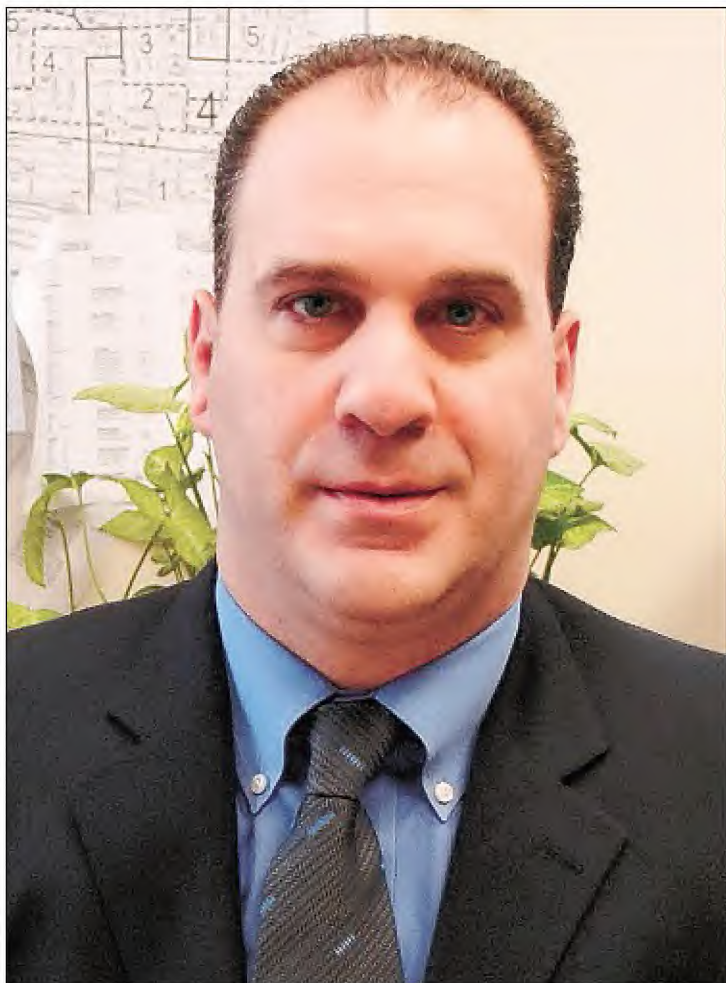
In addition to upgrading the technology, Esposito wants to continue with the tradition that his predecessor William Merdinger established by being available to all residents. "I want people to know that they can come in and make an appointment with me. I want them to sit down with me so I can go over their assessment and teach them about the entire process. Mr. Merdinger was always available to everyone during the last revaluation and I believe he saw well over 1,000 people in person to discuss their revaluation. I want to do the same thing and I believe I am a man of great patience and I am

eager to work with our residents," said Esposito. "I know a lot of people were upset with their revaluation or had questions but . . . the last revaluation in Belleville took place in 1977."

The township was last in number of appeals of the five townships that had reevaluations this year in Essex County. "Belleville had a total of 174 appeals to 9,201 line items. Montclair had 1,316 appeals out of 10,507 line items and Irvington had 320 appeals out of 9,541 line items. Going by those numbers things were pretty good in Belleville."

Merdinger will remain with the town and will serve as a township expert to help Esposito with some of the more complex projects he encounters. Merdinger has a contract that runs through 2008 with the township at this position. "Mr. Merdinger has been affiliated with the town since 1978 and was the assessor for a six-year period. He knows this place as well as anyone and he is a very well respected man in the field of assessment," said Esposito.

Esposito also has been involved in the world of appraisals for over 20 years and is a licensed real estate dealer, certified tax assessor and certified appraisal instructor with the New Jersey state board of appraisers.



JOHN MONTALVO/BELLEVILLE TIMES

Belleville native Kevin Esposito, the township's new tax assessor.

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BY DR. SUSAN M. GUARINO,
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nerve compression, disc compression and subluxation (when the vertebra has moved out of its normal position and is compressing nerve roots). The standard of care usually goes like this: Your primary doctor gives you a medication to relieve the inflamed state that you are in. If that doesn't work, they then prescribe physical therapy. Physical therapy then works on the muscle component of the problem. If that is unsuccessful, an epidural injection in your spine might be suggested. Much like an epidural for childbirth, that will just block your pain. If it works, then you go out without pain. But I ask you, did anyone address the disc problem or

just the symptoms of the disc problem? As a chiropractor, I address the pain as a signal that your body says STOP! More pressure on this low back is dangerous. That is why most people lie down for relief. The disc is under the least compression when lying down. If I artificially try to reduce your symptoms with pills or just work the muscle, I would be ignoring what the body is trying to do, which is immobilize you.

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Read their lips: no new school taxes this year

BY RICHARD DICKON
of Belleville Times

School taxes will remain flat this year according to the \$54 million 2008-2009 school budget introduced Monday night.

School Board Administrator Edward Appleton said after Monday night's Board of Education meeting, "This tentative budget introduced tonight does not include a tax increase."

He said the additional \$4 million in state aid received, which brings the total amount of aid to more than \$25 million, "contributed to maintaining the tax levy, and also will allow us to introduce new programs."

All-day kindergarten has been the program most talked about by the school administration as likely to be added, but Appleton said he did not want to talk about specifics until after the school board holds its budget workshop on March 24. He said there is no guarantee what programs will be included until after that workshop, and until the final budget comes up for a vote in early April.

One frequent critic of the school board's spending said the aid should not be used for new programs and new spending, but should instead be used to cut taxes, and help absorb negotiated salary increases for personnel.

Resident Vincent Frantantoni was not aware that the budget contained no tax increase until an interview on Tuesday. He asked Appleton Monday night if the budget contained a tax cut, to which Appleton replied a terse "no."

Despite the zero increase, he said the same thing has been hap-

pening since former governor James Florio first started giving state aid to schools in the early 1990s.

"Whenever the board gets more aid, they increase spending, so the more you give them the more they spend," Frantantoni said.

He said he doesn't mind the board spending the aid on one shot items, that won't recur in coming years, but adding new recurring items can hurt taxpayers down the road.

"With new programs, if you use the aid for them this year, what happens next year when the state cuts your aid, as they're likely to do?" Frantantoni said.

With salaries making up 80 percent of the budget, Frantantoni said the budget is guaranteed to grow by more than \$1.5 million on a four percent salary increase.

He said the four percent salary increases have been higher than inflation for several years, and a smaller increase should have been negotiated.

The adversarial tone between Appleton and Frantantoni contin-

ued at the meeting, when Appleton said he took exception to Frantantoni's assertion that state aid had increased from \$19.2 million in 2002 to \$21.2 million in 2006. Appleton said he stood by his remarks that aid had been flat for five years before this year.

"The information on state aid is accurate," Appleton said. "There was virtually no change from the time the state stopped using the same formula in 2002. Some types of aid change from year to year."

In an interview after the meeting, Appleton said of the state aid numbers, "Some aid affects the budget directly, and some does not, so the numbers change every year."

The total operating budget of the tentative school spending plan is \$56,461,596, minus \$1,803,741 for grants and entitlements, leaving the budget number at \$54,093,472.

None of the board members commented publicly on the tentative budget, saying the spending plan would be discussed on March 24.

For listings of upcoming events, fundraisers, organization meetings, trips, support groups, check the Events in the Area section of this newspaper.

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W376458-01

BHS students performing The Wiz this month

The students at Belleville High School will be staging the musical classic "The Wiz," based on the book and movie The Wizard of Oz, March 13, 14 and 15 at Belleville High School.

Show time each night is 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at the door.

Alexis-Iaona makes Northeastern dean's list

Belleville resident Vincent Alexis-Iaona, a student at Northeastern University, Boston, was recently named to the University's dean list for the fall 2007 semester. Vincent is majoring in Marketing.

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In the next few months, the Recycling Committee, which also includes Deputy Mayor Notari and Councilman Nicosia, will be working with me on ways to increase awareness of recycling in

Belleville. Additional information will be available on the updated Belleville Website www.belleville-nj.org as well.
Please help us increase our recycling tonnage. It helps save tax dollars, energy and our environment.

Councilman Steve Rovell
Chairman of the Recycling Committee

Belleville's Jared Vizzi named to dean's list at Boston University for Fall

Jared J. Vizzi, a resident of Boston University for the Fall Belleville, has recently semester. been named to the Dean's List at

Council members may be reached by calling 973-450-3302. Their voicemail is 973-450-3345.

Easter Bunny hopping into Belleville March 15

The Cherry Blossom Players will host its second annual "Party with the Easter Bunny" at 2:30 PM on Saturday, March 15th. The party will kick off with games, storytelling and an Easter Egg Hunt and culminate in a visit from the Easter Bunny himself. The fun takes place in the downstairs hall of Christ Episcopal Church, 393 Washington Avenue, in Belleville, NJ. Tickets are \$7 for a child/guardian duo. Advanced tickets can be purchased by calling either 862-368-4394 or 201-563-1746. For additional details, feel free to contact: cherryblossomplayers@hotmail.com.

MetLife Mutual Fund Investigation

If you purchased **State Street Research Funds** from MetLife between January 2002 and February 2005, you may have a claim to recover the cost of hidden fees. To speak with an attorney representing investors' claims against MetLife,

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BUSINESS Spotlight



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working with Mike and John to help with their team products and company promotions. WorldWide Gear was established in 2000, with a local retail outlet at 529 Joralemon St. in Belleville, NJ. Open Monday through Friday 11:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday 11:30 to 3:30. They carry a full line of apparel from manufacturers such as Russell and Champion. WorldWide Gear is a representative supplier of Wilson sports uniforms and equipment. They are recognized by the Advertising

Specialty Institute (ASI) as a supplier of corporate promotional products. WorldWide Gear supplies the traditional Varsity Jackets to local student athletes. The Varsity Jacket is fast becoming a great product to help promote your company and WorldWide Gear is quickly becoming the largest supplier of the "Corporate Varsity Jacket". WorldWide Gear has invested in today's technology to make it convenient for you to order from the internet at, www.worldwidegear.com

where you can customize your products to suit your needs. The WorldWide Gear web site has an interactive page allowing you to customize a Varsity Jacket and see what it will look like. Team and league directors are encouraged to view the site to see the customized uniforms available for on-line ordering. WorldWide Gear is dedicated to helping you fulfill your corporate and team gear needs. Give Mike and John a call at 973-450-0010.

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THE BIG 9-0

Members of Christ Episcopal Church gathered together on Tuesday, February 12 to celebrate the 90th birthday of Josephine Robustello, a life-long member of the parish. Josephine is a resident of the Forest Hill Healthcare Center in Newark. Those who attended the party, pictured from left, are Joseph Dedalonis, Heather Walker, Amando Daruich, Josephine Robustello, Rodrigo Apolaza, Anne Ward, Father Paul Walker, Doris Cxypoliski, Father Randy Webster, John Idenden, Frank Branagan and Mancy Idenden. Not pictured is Michael Petti, who took the photograph.

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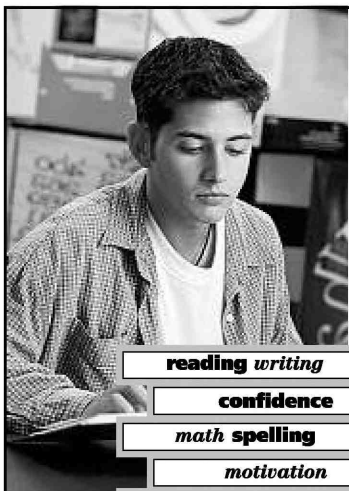
Sunday, March 9 at 8:30 AM - WFDU 89.1 FM
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W360651-03

Free movie screenings at Bloomfield Library

Monday at the Movies

The Bloomfield Public Library is hosting "Monday Afternoon at the Movies" in March. Films start at 12:15 p.m. in the barrier-free library theatre. Admission is free and all are welcome. Parents are advised to check movie ratings before bringing children.

March 10 – Songcatcher
A musicologist (Janet McTeer) visiting the Appalachian Mountains is astonished to hear the locals (Pat Carroll, Aidan Quinn, Emmy Rossum) singing folksongs in the style of their Elizabethan British ancestors. This film won a Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Award for Outstanding Ensemble Performance. (2001 – Color – 105 minutes – PG-13)

March 17 – True Grit

Young Mattie Ross (Kim Darby) hires an over-the-hill lawman (John Wayne won an Oscar for his performance) and a Texas Ranger (Glen Campbell, who sings the title song) to help her track down her father's killer. (1969 – Color – 128 minutes – G)

March 24 – Funny Girl
Singer/comedienne Fannie Brice (Barbara Streisand's Oscar-winning debut role) won the hearts of American audiences despite personal heartbreak with the love of her life, gambler Nick Arnstein (Omar Sharif). Bob Merrill/Julie Styne songs include "People" and "Don't Rain on My Parade." (1968 – Color – 155 minutes – G)

March 31 – Shirley Valentine

When a saucy young girl marries her "fella" (Bernard Hill) she ends up as a bored middle-aged housewife (Pauline Collins) who talks to her kitchen wall. Can a trip to Greece and a fling with a sexy tavern keeper (Tom Conti) bring back the real Shirley Valentine? (1989 – Color – 108 minutes – R)

Thursday at the Movies

The Bloomfield Public Library is hosting free movie screenings on Thursday afternoons in March. Each movie begins at 12:15 p.m. in the library theatre.

Admission is free and all are welcome. Parents are advised to check movie ratings before bringing children.

him down. This film also stars Julia Stiles, David Strathairn and Scott Glenn. (2007 – color – 115 minutes – PG-13)

March 13 – Shrek the Third

When his new father-in-law, King Harold, falls ill, Shrek is seen as the heir to the land of Far, Far Away. Not one to give up his beloved swamp, Shrek recruits his friends Donkey and Puss in Boots to install the rebellious Artie as the new king. Princess Fiona, however, rallies a band of royal girlfriends to fend off a coup d'état by the jilted Prince Charming. This delightful animated tale features the voices of Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, Cameron Diaz and Antonio Banderas. (2007 – color – 92 minutes – PG)

tries to psych out the rancher. This movie stars Russell Crowe, Christian Bale, Logan Lerman and Peter Fonda and is rated R for violence and some language. (2007 – color – 117 minutes – R)

March 27 – Coney Island

At the turn of the last century, smooth-talking con man Eddie Johnson (George Montgomery) weasels his way into a job at friend and rival Joe Rocco's (Cesar Romero) Coney Island night spot. Eddie meets the club's star attraction, Kate Farley (Betty Grable), a brash singer with a penchant for flashy clothes. Eddie and Kate argue as he tries to soften her image. See what happens next. (1943 – color – 96 minutes – NR)

– Admission is free for all movie screenings. For information and/or directions, call 973-566-6200.

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Reader's Theatre to present 'The Goat'

The Reader's Theater group of Nutley Little Theatre (NLT) is to present a reading of "The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia" – an Edward Albee drama that challenges the boundaries of love and friendship – on Sunday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the NLT Barn, 47 Erie Place, Nutley.

Marvin W. Krieger of Hoboken directs the production, which is free and open to the public. Reader's Theater features actors reading scripts of new and established plays, supplementing NLT's regular, fully staged performances.

"The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia" explores the relationships of a husband who is torn by his loves and longings; his wife, who can not understand the complexity of her husband's love for her and another; a son who struggles with his own feelings and the destruction of the family as he had perceived it; and the friend, who becomes the catalyst.

The cast includes Cody Dalton of Montclair, W. Philip Rafferty of Montclair, William Vonroth III of Nutley and Darren Tobia of Jersey City.

Nutley Little Theatre stages its productions at the NLT Barn, 47 Erie Place, Nutley, located off Brookfield Avenue (one block east of Franklin Avenue) in the heart of the Erie Place Historic District. For directions, visit the Web site www.nutleylittletheatre.com.

– For more information about this or other productions, call 973-667-0374.

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

For the answer to this week's puzzle, turn to the classified section.

"A JOYOUS SMASH REVIVAL!"

—Ben Brantley, The New York Times

Tuesday, Mar 18 – Sunday, Mar 23

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'Rapunzel' on stage at Westminster Arts Center

The New Jersey Theatre Alliance and the Westminster Arts Center at Bloomfield College are presenting Running Rabbit Family Theatre's production of "Rapunzel" on Saturday, March 15 at 11 a.m.

This performance is part of the 11th annual Family Week at the Theatre, a yearly event that provides free and discounted theatre programming during the second week of March. This performance is being offered at a "buy one child's ticket for \$8 and get one for free" rate. Adult tickets are \$10 each.

The Westminster Arts Center's Family Series has been going strong for the past year and a half, entertaining children and families from Bloomfield and the surrounding area.

"Rapunzel" tells the story of an impoverished peasant and his wife who, without permission, take crops from a garden belonging to the Witch next door. In return for sparing his life, the Witch demands the peasant's first born child. Three years later, the debt is paid; the child is given the name Rapunzel and carried off. Locked high in her tower by her overbearing sorceress of a stepmother, Rapunzel longs to

experience the outside world.

Rapunzel's opportunity presents itself on her 16th birthday with the arrival of Prince Brian. He whisks the maiden away, and the misadventures begin.

This clever rendition of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale features an enchantress who is herself in search of love, a bumbling valet who awkwardly attempts to assist the Prince in his rescue attempt, and a heroine whose first time encounters with the outside world provide numerous laughable predicaments.

Family Week at the Theatre is an annual statewide event that offers free and discounted tickets to attendees. It was developed to encourage families to attend professional theatre together by making the experience affordable, educational and exciting. In all 21 New Jersey counties, youngsters (ages 5 to 18) are to receive free tickets to over 100 performances and special events; they include free classes, workshops and backstage tours.

Since its 1998 inception, the program has served over 45,000 people with professional theatre performances and activities. In

honor of its 11th year, the New Jersey Theatre Alliance is expanding programming beyond one week in hopes of making this the most accessible and enjoyable year to date. This year, the New Jersey Theatre Alliance is inviting residents to experience the month of March in "STAGES (Sharing Theatre Arts with Generations through Events Statewide)."

Although these performances are offered with buy-one, get-one-free tickets for children, there is a nominal admission charge for adults. Reservations are highly recommended. For more information and/or to RSVP, call the Westminster box office at 973-748-9008, ext. 279.

The Westminster Arts Center is located at the corner of Franklin and Fremont streets, Bloomfield. To receive a full schedule of events for Family Week at the Theatre (Saturday, March 8 through Sunday, March 16), call 1-800-THE-ARTS or visit the Web site www.familyweek.com.

Visit the Web site www.JerseyArts.com for more information about other arts programming around the Garden State.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREGORY ALLEN

From left are "Rapunzel" cast members Michele Tauber, Cassie Carelli, Paul Whelihan and Christopher Jones.

'Food For Thought' at Fitzgerald's

Fitzgerald's 1928, Glen Ridge's newest restaurant, is playing host to "Food For Thought," an evening of theatre, music and fine dining on Sunday, March 9 at 5 p.m.

Patrons are being treated to a four-course meal interspersed with ragtime and chamber music from the 1920s, the decade in which the restaurant's building was erected. Joining the culinary-musical journey is Garth Kravits, having recently starred in Broadway's "Drowsy Chaperone," in which he performed material scripted by acclaimed Manhattan playwright Randall David Cook.

The multi-faceted event is being sold as an all-inclusive \$55 per person package, with gratuity included. The New Jersey Arts Collective (NJAC) is producing "Food For Thought" in partnership with the Gas Lamp Costume Shop, located next door to Fitzgerald's.

"Food For Thought" is not an entirely new idea, with playwright Cook and New Jersey musician Kenneth Ellison having staged a similar event in Princeton last year. Cook and Ellison joined NJAC to bring the concept to North Jersey — with one dramatic difference: while the Princeton performance was essentially a chamber music concert about food, actual food is integrated into the March 9 production.

"Every course of the dinner has a musical course paired with it, so we begin with a musical 'appetizer' and take the audience all the way through to the 'dessert music,'" said Ellison.

Although the Fitzgerald's chef and kitchen staff is preparing all the food, the musical courses are

from multiple sources. Ellison is reluctant to reveal too many surprises, but he said to expect chamber music from the 1920s, e.g. that of American neo-Classical composer Walter Piston, alternated with ragtime and jazz by Scott Joplin and George Gershwin, among other composers.

NJAC Artistic Director Darren Gage notes that Kravits has a Glen Ridge connection, as he has split time during his "Chaperone" run between the Broadway stage and Ridgewood Avenue School, where he directs Glen Ridge High School Drama Club productions. Describing the event as "groundbreaking," Gage cites the importance of his partnership with Fitzgerald's Tavern and the Gas Lamp Costume Shop:

"Paul Brewster at the restaurant and Jessica Sporn with Gas Lamp have been instrumental in making this evening happen," said Gage,

"and it's an exciting evening for Glen Ridge, as it features two of the town's exciting new businesses."

Situated in adjacent buildings, both Fitzgerald's 1928 and the Gas Lamp Costume Shop have only been open for a few months. Both have thrived in that short span, however, with the restaurant garnering an increasingly devoted following and the costume shop firmly on New Jersey's theatrical map, housing one of the largest and most diverse costume collections in the state.

"Food For Thought" is scheduled for one night only on Sunday, March 9 at 5 p.m. at Fitzgerald's 1928. The restaurant is located at 13 Herman St., Glen Ridge, and may be found at the Web site www.fitzgeralds1928.com. All-inclusive ticket packages for the evening are available at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/27990, with entree choices made in advance online.

— Additional information is available at www.gaslamp-players.org and www.NJArtsCollective.org.



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ARRIVAL



Joshua Paul Durante

A son, Joshua Paul, was born to Christine and Paul Durante of Clifton Dec. 14, 2007 at Hackensack University Medical Center. Birth weight was 8 pounds, 3 ounces.

Grandparents are Rosemary and Ronald Racioppi of Belleville and Shirley and Dominick Durante of Wood-Ridge. Great grandparents are Lena and Michael Campanella of Bloomfield, Mary Racioppi of Bloomfield and Gretel Friend of Chicago, IL. Godparents are Kenneth Racioppi of Belleville and Natalie Pedevilano of Lodi.

Attention Readers

We are always happy to print the news of your new arrival, engagement, wedding, etc. at no charge.

But it only delays things if you send your good news to the general editor of the paper.

Social news goes on the Lifetime page which is a common page. That means that the same page appears in all four of our papers, Nutley Sun, Belleville Times, Bloomfield Life and Glen Ridge Voice.

Please send all social news, arrivals, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, etc. to maguire@northjersey.com or mail it to Helen Maguire, 90 Centre St., Nutley, NJ 07110. She is the Lifestyles Editor and the general editor will only send it on to her. We will gladly accept jpeg pictures.

Questions? Call Helen at 973 667-0645 and leave a message. Need to talk to her personally? Call on Monday.

WEDDING



Ingoglia-Fortunato nuptials performed

Brenda Fortunato, daughter of Carmen and Janet Fortunato of Belleville, became the bride Aug. 11, 2007 of Matthew Ingoglia, son of Robert and MaryAnn Ingoglia of Flanders.

The Rev. Msgr. William Fadrowski performed the double ring ceremony in Queen of Peace Church, North Arlington. A reception followed at Meadow Wood Manor, Randolph.

The bride was escorted by her father. Jennifer Broyer, sister of the bride, was matron of honor. Bridesmaids included Amy Esposito, Dana Fiore, Allison Ingoglia, Anissa Ingoglia and Mariah Reilly. Julia Fortunato, niece of the bride, was flower girl.

Michael Ingoglia served as his brother's best man. Ushering were Carmen N. Fortunato, Frank Karpak, Nicholas Ryan, Stephen Wood and Michael Zanella. Angelo Fortunato, nephew of the bride, was ringbearer.

Mrs. Ingoglia, an alumna of Felician College, Lodi, is a graduate student at The College of New Jersey. She is a high school math teacher in Ridgewood.

Mr. Ingoglia, a graduate of Rutgers University, is a trial data manager with Novartis Pharmaceuticals, East Hanover.

The couple is living in Morristown after honeymooning in Hawaii.

HOPING FOR A HOME

Dino is an adorable, affectionate guy! He is robust, full of energy and seems to have springs on his feet!! Dino is looking for a home where he can run and play and basically show off his charm. He LOVES to go for long walks, but if you have a backyard with a high fence, Dino would love to spend time there also. Dino has been working with our resident trainer, Ted, and he is a top-notch student! Ted will be glad to answer any questions you



may have about this great dog. Dino is neutered and up-to-date on his shots. Stop by and meet Dino at John A. Bukowski Animal Shelter in Bloomfield or call 973 748-0194.

RECIPE

Date and Nut Bread

1 pkg. dates, cut up
1 1/2 cups boiling water
2 tsp. baking soda
2 1/4 cups flour
1/4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 egg, well beaten
1 tbsp. melted butter

1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup walnuts, chopped

Add dates to boiling water and let stand. Mix dry ingredients. Add dates in water to dry ingredients and then add the remaining ingredients. Bake in greased loaf pan at 325 degrees for one hour.

St. Paul's Cookbook

ENGAGEMENTS



Denise Balady engaged to Michael Stefanelli Jr.

Sam and Anna Balady of North Haledon announce the engagement of their daughter, Denise, to Michael Stefanelli Jr., son of Michael and Deborah Stefanelli of Nutley.

An August wedding is planned. Miss Balady, an alumna of the University of Scranton, has com-

pleted her master's degree at Felician College, Lodi, and is a director of religious education and teaching in Paterson.

Mr. Stefanelli, a graduate of Monmouth University, is a financial specialist with Wachovia Bank in Verona.



Meredith Miesieski to marry Jim DeSanti

Robert and Janet Miesieski of Nutley announce the engagement of their daughter, Meredith, to Jim DeSanti, son of Fred and Dale DeSanti of Mendham.

Miss Miesieski is an alumna of

Nutley High School and Rutgers University.

Mr. DeSanti is a graduate of Mendham High School and Rutgers University and earned a master's degree at Stevens Institute.

SLCA always welcomes new members



LIFE IN SILVER LAKE
CHARLES BURKE

It's that time of year, when our Silver Lake Civic Association's dues are due. So, for all of you that are members, please respond and for those who would like to be a member, listen up.

The SLCA has been organized for the purpose of preserving the quality of life within the borders of our community. The association will work to enhance the community through the efforts of its members.

Our SLCA was founded in May of 1993 and will celebrate its 15th birthday. Yep, who would imagine a civic association still going and still vibrant? For \$5 per year, which has not gone up in 15 years, you will be entitled to receiving news of the meetings, keeping abreast of all happenings, and join in our birthday bash on May 20. We have about six meetings a year where you can voice your opinions and tell us about any problems you have in the neighborhood and we hold two dances, one in the fall and one in the spring. Each year we award a \$1,000 scholarship to a BHS graduate, who graduated School #4, will attend a college or trade school, and most importantly, still lives in Silver Lake. A tree lighting ceremony is held in December, at St. Anthony's School yard where the association planted a Ms. Holly Tree in memory of Helen and Joseph Zarro. In Year 2007, we had

231 paid up members of the SLCA. We support our school in the lake, #4, by holding contests for the children and donating a sizeable amount to the Home & School. So you can see, the SLCA

is alive and well. If you want to become a member, we would love to have you. Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 18.

Congratulations to Filiberto Colon who was named District 14

tournament Most Outstanding Wrestler in Livingston after winning the 119 lb title for his fourth district championship. His record is 37-0. J.J. Soprano took second at 125. Congratulations to BHS

Head Coach Joseph Nisivoccia who was named the District 14 Coach of the Year. Way to Go, Belleville.

And remember, we love Silver Lake.

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Elks' breakfast March 16

The Belleville Elks Lodge #1123 will be holding their monthly "All You Can Eat Breakfast" on Sunday, March 16 at the Belleville Elks Hall, 254 Washington Avenue, Belleville from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

The menu includes pancakes, French toast, eggs any style, bacon, Taylor ham, potatoes, juice, coffee and donuts. The cost of this fine breakfast is adults \$5, children under 10 years old \$3 and children under 3 are free. Where can you get so much for so little money these days, what a bargain? As with all Belleville Elks functions the public is always invited to come and join in with them.

As a reminder the monthly breakfasts are held on the third Sunday of the month from September until May of every year. If there are three or more inches of snow the breakfast will be cancelled.

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REGION 4 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Colon captures gold; Soprano headed to A.C.

BY MIKE LAMBERTI
for Belleville Times

Filiberto Colon continued his phenomenal wrestling career last Saturday at the Region 4 championships in West Orange. This weekend, the Belleville High senior hopes to conclude that career with the ultimate exclamation mark, the first state championship for a Belleville High wrestler in 12 years.

Colon (40-0) dominated the 119-pound weight class en route to his first region championship by pinning Jose Vega of Hasbrouck Heights/Wood Ridge in 41 seconds. It was his 153rd career win, the second most victories in state history. Colon also tied the record for career pins by a New Jersey high school wrestler with his win in the final. Four-time state champion Mike Grey of Delbarton holds the state record for most wins with 158 and is now tied with Colon for the most falls. Grey wrestled from 2002-2006.

Belleville native Matt Fusco also excelled at Region 4. The senior at Queen of Peace in North Arlington defeated Belleville High's James Soprano, 5-1, for his second straight title at 125 pounds. Soprano, the 112-pound champion at Region 4 in 2007, hopes to get another opportunity to wrestle Fusco in the state tournament this weekend at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. It will be Soprano's

third straight trip to Atlantic City, where the senior hopes to bring home his first state medal.

The final weekend of the 2007-08 wrestling season begins tomorrow night with preliminary round action in Atlantic City at 5 p.m. The pre-quarterfinals follow at 7 p.m. On Saturday morning, the quarterfinals commence at 10 a.m., followed by wrestlebacks. The semifinals, which generally produce a full house at Boardwalk Hall, start at 5 p.m., followed by another round of wrestlebacks.

This Sunday, there is the final round of wrestlebacks at 10 a.m., followed by the parade of champions, where all the wrestlers who have garnered a medal in the 14 weight classes are welcomed to Boardwalk Hall. The state championship bouts will then begin at 2 p.m. Last year, over 43,000 attended the three-day event in Atlantic City, and there's a good possibility that number could be exceeded this weekend.

Locally, Colon (153-12 for his career) was clearly the story at Region 4 in West Orange. His performance on Saturday was outstanding, as he pinned Justin Estevez of Livingston in 24 seconds, then stopped a very good wrestler in Vega for his first region title after three straight second place finishes.

The usually reserved Colon was clearly relieved in winning the elusive region title. One night earlier,



MARTIN GUMB/BELLEVILLE TIMES

Belleville senior 119-pounder Filiberto Colon finally got over the hump at the Region 4 Championship last weekend in West Orange, winning the first title of his illustrious career.

he was far from pleased after a 17-0 win by technical fall in 6:00.

"I didn't wrestle well on Friday," Colon said after winning the region crown. "I wanted to come back and wrestle to my potential today, and I think I did that."

Belleville coach Joe Nisivoccia, who was named the Region 4

Coach of the Year, felt confident Colon would wrestle well last Saturday.

"He knew he wasn't at his best in the region quarterfinals," Nisivoccia said. "He came out with a purpose on Saturday. Filiberto has been working hard all year long and I'm happy he got the

region championship. I feel very good about his chances this weekend."

Colon has two state medals to his credit, in 2005 and 2006. Last year, he missed out on a medal by one bout. He should gain a very

SEE REGION 4, PAGE 19

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Colon, Soprano, Ackerman, Cifelli vie for state medals

BY MIKE LAMBERTI
for Belleville Times

The 2007-2008 New Jersey high school wrestling season is down to its final weekend, on the grand stage at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City.

Three hundred thirty six wrestlers from eight regions of the state will venture to various hotels on, or near the famous Boardwalk, settle in for a little while, then head to Boardwalk Hall to pursue the wrestler's ultimate dream of a state medal.

Of those 336 wrestlers, 112 will have a medal hung around their neck sometime Sunday afternoon. Some will laugh, some will cry and many will be simply overwhelmed by the 43,000, or so fans who will watch the three day event, which begins tomorrow night at 6, continues with a full day on Saturday and concludes on Sunday with morning wrestlebacks and the 14 championship bouts, which will commence at 2 p.m.

So, let's take a look at the weight classes and a one man's predictions as to what could happen this weekend.

103- Very rarely does a defending champ come back to this weight class and this year is no

exception. Last year's champ, Frank Cagnina, not only moved up a weight class, he switched schools from Bergen Catholic of Oradell to Queen of Peace. Locally, Montclair's Gerson Deleon is one of those few 103 pounders who is an upper classmen, and his strength and maturity could be a factor. Deleon won the Region 4 title while Seton Hall Prep freshman Lou Mascola, who dealt Deleon his only loss this year, won the Region 3 crown. It's a pretty wide open field, with a slight edge to Joe Orecchio of Don Bosco Prep.

112- Cagnina has to be the favorite here, but this class is loaded, with Hackensack's Anthony Racioppi, High Point's Billy Gould and Joe Duca of Paulsboro. Until someone stops him, Cagnina gets the nod. Here's hoping Anthony Cifelli of Nutley is standing on the podium as a medal winner on Sunday. He's a class young man who's worked hard and could finish in the top eight.

119- Okay Belleville fans, what do you think? Will Filiberto Colon be wearing a first place medal on Sunday? Why not? He's 40-0, wrestled great last weekend and knows this is his last shot at the podium's top step. Obviously, it

won't be easy. Vinnie Dellafave of Toms River East was third in the state at 112 last year and a region champ at 119 this season. Vinny Fava of Don Bosco Prep was sixth last year at 112 and won a region title this year as well. Mike FrancoBandiero of Edison, a Region 5 champ last weekend, is very good, too. Brearley's Kenny Knapp is also outstanding and Andrew Wrede of Lenape Valley can't be discounted, either. What the heck, let's go with Colon.

125- Bergen Catholic's Joe Trause is the defending champ. One of his few losses came this year to Mike Fusco, a Belleville native who wrestles at Queen of Peace. Fusco, a senior, has the ability to go far, and perhaps see Trause in the semifinals, or finals. Rich Pennisi of Collingswood, Lakeland's Colton Chalkley and our own James Soprano are also top choices, but Trause has to be the favorite.

130- Bobby Dabal of North Bergen won his fourth straight Region 4 title last weekend and has his sights set on a state title. He came close last year, finishing third and defeating two former state champs in the process. This time, it's Dabal's turn to finish first.

135- A key here is if Glen Caninci of Queen of Peace is able to compete at a high level. He hurt his elbow in the Region 4 semifinals and skipped the title bout. If he's healthy, he'll be a big factor, along with Joe Lospinoso of Brearley and Matt Spataro of Bergen Catholic. For now, let's go with Lospinoso.

140- Trevor Melde won the 135-pound state title while wrestling for Delbarton last year and now he's at DePaul of Wayne and should be the odds-on favorite to win here. Watch for a good run by Mike Trasso of Queen of Peace, too.

145- Jackson Brady of Camden Catholic is a slight favorite here.

152- Nick Menditto of Ocean Township won the 145-pound state title last year and has to be considered the favorite to win a second crown this weekend.

160- Jackson's Scott Winston enters this weekend with two state championships to his credit and a perfect record for his high school career. Hard to imagine he'll lose this weekend. Dakota Moore of Camden Catholic could be a tough challenger, however.

171- Lodi's Dan Rinaldi and Kyle Hess of Cinnaminson are the top choices here, with Rinaldi the choice.

189- Local fans are hoping Bloomfield's Ryan Ackerman, a two-time Region 4 champion at this weight class, can place in the top eight this weekend. There's no reason to believe that he can't do it. Bergen Catholic's Jonathan Becker and Andrew Campolattano of Bound Brook are top choices. Becker gets the nod for the top spot.

215- Real tough one. Mike Suk of Randolph, Lukasz Stala of Don Bosco Prep, Jesse Boyden of Brearley, Kevin Innis of St. Peter's Prep and Glenn Carson of Southern are among the favorites. Carson was second in the state at this weight class, losing a close 6-4 decision in the final last year. He's the choice to win it this season.

HWT- Bayonne's Jerome Otis-Harris gets the nod in a very balanced field which includes Chris Manna of Don Bosco Prep.

Enjoy it this weekend. It's the culmination of months of cutting weight, working out and perfecting moves for these talented wrestlers. There should be a large crowd on hand to witness the crowning of 14 champions, as well as the other deserving medal winners. Last year's crowd of 43,049 for the three days set a new record. Don't be surprised if that's exceeded this year.



Congratulations & Happy Birthday to the BIRTHDAY CLUB



**NUTLEY
SUN**

BELLEVILLE ★ TIMES

BLOOMFIELD LIFE

**GLEN RIDGE
VOICE**



Frank Anton Matrona
Nutley
February 22



Nicole Volpe
Bloomfield
February 27



Nicholas Volpe
Bloomfield
February 2



Daniel DiAntonio
Nutley
February 20



Dominic Copollone
Belleville
February 22



Kyle Tice
Bloomfield
February 5



Kiera Lynn Martin
Nutley
February 22



Samantha Daly
Nutley
February 27



Shannon Hesse
Belleville
February 7



Charlie Williamson
Nutley
February 23



Sophia Genna
Nutley
February 18



Taylor Laiacona
Bloomfield
February 24



Kaitlyn Cucolo
Nutley
February 16



Mary Laney
Nutley
February 25



Mariella Polizzi
Nutley
February 14



Jordyn Laiacona
Bloomfield
February 20



Christopher Sarno
Nutley
February 4



Kaila Nicole Ferri
Bloomfield
February 11



Mika Santiago
Bloomfield
February 11



Jonathan Ciffei
Nutley
February 6



Madison Walsh
Nutley
February 3



Frankie Kokos
Nutley
February 27



Archie St. Amant
Nutley
January 19



Jenna Ferraro
Nutley
February 18



Anthony Bucca
Nutley
January 10



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**NUTLEY
SUN**

BELLEVILLE ★ TIMES

BLOOMFIELD LIFE

**GLEN RIDGE
VOICE**



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Community Newspapers of **North Jersey Media Group**

90 Centre St., Nutley, N.J. 07110

March Birthday Club

Entry Coupon

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March Birthdate: _____

Parents' Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

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HINT: Never equate any medicine with candy when trying to coax a child to take it.

WORSHIP BRIEFS

Bethany Lutheran Church

Worship services

Worship services for Bethany Lutheran Church are held at 9 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. year-round. Childcare is available. Everyone is welcome.

Bethany holds Council Retreat

Pastor Nancy S. Moore will guide the newly installed church

Council during an official retreat to be held at Bethany Lutheran Church on Saturday morning, March 8. Council leader and diaconal minister Karen Lewis will lead the new members as they explore ideas for the church's improvement and outreach and discuss the best ways to implement new plans. Worship is held every Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. and includes the distribution of Holy Communion. Childcare is available. Everyone is welcome. Call the church for more information.

tion.

Sunday Afternoons with Iglesia Luterana

The popular Lutheran Latino service, Iglesia Luterana, is now held every Sunday at the new time of 1 p.m. in the sanctuary of Bethany Lutheran Church. The Rev. Nancy S. Moore presides over the service and the distribution of Holy Communion every week. Once a month, she delivers a sermon that is simultaneously interpreted into Spanish. Diaconal ministers Pedro Dulanto and Madeline Dulanto, assist the pastor in the Lutheran liturgical worship service spoken entirely in Spanish.

This community of worshippers hosts many different religious and social activities every week at Bethany including nightly ESL

Classes at 8:30 p.m. during the week and Folk Dances beginning at 7:30 p.m. every Monday and Friday. They are a welcoming and active congregation that warmly encourages everyone to join them at their reverent and joyous gatherings. Call the church office for further information.

Bethany Lutheran Church is a "Reconciling in Christ" parish. It is the stated policy of this congregation to welcome and fully include persons of every race, age, gender, marital status, ability and sexual orientation. The church is located at 188 New Street, Belleville. Call 973-759-1555.

Fewsmith Memorial Presbyterian Church

Lenten breakfast series

On Wednesday, March 12, from 6:50 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., Pastor George McCulloch of Montgomery Presbyterian Church, Belleville, will offer his reflections on "A Walk with Jesus." Born in Scotland, Pastor McCulloch came to the U.S. in 1949. After retiring as an executive with the Boy Scouts of America, he answered his calling and became Pastor of Montgomery Church in June 2002.

People of all denominations are invited to come and hear a spiritual message and receive a hearty breakfast each Wednesday during

SEE WORSHIP BRIEFS, PAGE 17

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Rev. Charles J. Miller, Pastor
973-338-9190

Fewsmith Memorial Presbyterian Church

444 Union Ave. Belleville 973-759-6869

Church School & Sunday Worship 10:00am

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- Sunday - 7am - 8am
- 9:15am - 10:45am & 12:15pm

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This scripture is the focus of the current Christian season and will remain so until Resurrection Sunday. The key component of this

scripture is God's love. There is action in love. God loved us so much that "He gave." He willingly gave His only begotten Son.

Can God see our love in action? Unfortunately God sees more of our hate in action. He sees us fighting and bickering over things that really don't matter. What are we

willing to give as a sign of our love and appreciation for the sacrifice that our Heavenly Father has made? Again, unfortunately, God sees us seeking to 'get' at any cost instead of giving.

We can turn this around and put love in action. We can give God thanks by completely surrendering

our lives to Him. We can love one another unconditionally. We can give to others without expecting anything in return. We can forgive the same way God has forgiven us. Most importantly, we can share the good news of John 3:16. From this moment forward we'll remember God's love in action. He gave His

Son and this will encourage us to constantly put our love in action.

*Pastor Crystal Griffith
O.A.T.S Christian Assembly*

WORSHIP BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 16

the Lenten Season. You will get eggs, bacon, sausage, cold cereal, toast or sweet breads, coffee, tea and juice.

There is a suggested donation of \$4 for adults and \$2 for children. For more information, call the church.

Lenten small group study and discussion

This year the study and discussion, led by Pastor Dr. Jim Horn, will be on "Christian Caregiving - a Way of Life." This is a Lay Caring Ministry based on the well-known Stephen Ministries. It is intended for spiritual and personal growth in our ability to care for people who face serious challenges. The importance will be found in learning what to say and do for one-to-one Christian care to the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, separated, divorced, unemployed, and others facing crisis or life challenges.

The study and discussion will be held immediately after our regular coffee-hour on April 6, and should last about 90 minutes. We will close by 1 p.m. Pizza and soda

will be provided. If you should not eat pizza, bring your own bag lunch. Open to all people of all ages.

Fewsmith Memorial Presbyterian

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OBITUARIES

Helen Rudden

A memorial service was held for Helen (Haley) Rudden, 79, formerly of Belleville March 1 at the S.W. Brown & Son Funeral Home, Nutley.

Mrs. Rudden passed away Feb. 1 at her home in Glen Allen, VA. She was a resident of Belleville for over 35 years and served four years on the Belleville Board of Education. She is survived by her husband

of 60 years, Robert Rudden, her sons, Newark Fire Department Battalion Chief Jeffrey Rudden, Patrick and Robert and 44 nieces and nephews.

Daniel Vasallo; grandchildren, Marie Imperiale, Natalie Cimilluca, Patrick Appolonia, Frank Alessio Jr., Robert Alessio, Michelle Gabriele and Jennifer Mc Kusker and 15 great-grandchildren.

Home, Belleville. Mrs. Termezano passed away Feb. 21 at Clara Maass Continuing Care Center, Belleville. Born in Tacuarembó, Uruguay, she lived there until 1975, when she moved to the United States. She resided in Newark and then moved to Belleville, where she lived for the past 23 years. She worked in Columbus Hospital, Newark for 18 years doing house-keeping. She is survived by her husband, Juan J. Termezano, her sister, Teresa Cuenca, her friend, Gabriel and one nephew and two nieces.

Marie Roatti

A Mass was offered for Marie (Calcagno) Roatti, 87, of Belleville Feb. 27 at St. Lucy's Church, Newark, after the funeral from the S.W. Brown & Son Funeral Home, Nutley.

Mrs. Roatti passed away Feb. 24 at her home in Belleville. Born and raised in Newark, Mrs. Roatti lived in Bloomfield and Nutley before moving to Belleville this past year. She had been a soldierer with ITT Avionics Division in Clifton for 41 years before retiring in 1982.

She is survived by her husband, Vincent; her daughters, Jean Paulsen and Geraldine Roatti; her son, Vincent Roatti Jr.; her sisters, Shirley Dodd and Angie DeLuca, and two grandchildren, Jill and John Paulsen. She was predeceased by her brother, Gerard Calcagno.

Anthony V. Bellina

A Mass was offered for Anthony V. Bellina of Belleville Feb. 29 at Holy Family Church, Nutley, after the funeral from the S.W. Brown & Son Funeral Home.

Mr. Bellina passed away Feb. 26 at Clara Maass Medical Center, Belleville.

Born and raised in Newark, Mr. Bellina moved to Belleville 40 years ago. He was a sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, serving in India and Okinawa. He retired as the manager of the Pedalino Dress Corp. in Newark.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Eleanor L. (Pedalino) Bellina; his sisters, Rose Sauline and Frances Primavera and her husband, Rocco, and his sisters-in-law, Helen Branco, Frances Fiorella and Ann D'Amato. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents, Mary and Charles Bellina; his brother, Sam Maida; his sisters, Lucy and Adeline; his sisters-in-law, Marian De Padova and Jane Dente, and a brother-in-law, Peter Pedalino.

Maria Angelica Termezano

A service was held for Maria Angelica Termezano (nee Gonzalez-Tito), 68, of Belleville Feb. 25 at the Imperial Reception Chapel in the Irvine-Cozzarelli Memorial

Phyllis Andolora

A Mass was offered for Phyllis (Russo) Andolora, 81, of Belleville March 4 at Holy Family Church, Nutley, after the funeral from the S.W. Brown & Son Funeral Home.

Mrs. Andolora passed away Feb. 29 at Clara Maass Continuing Care Center, Belleville.

Born and raised in Kearny, Mrs. Andolora lived in Lyndhurst before moving to Belleville in 1952. She was a hairdresser at the Charming Lady Salon in Nutley before her retirement in 2003. She loved to work with stained glass and it was her hobby for over 20 years.

The wife of the late Stephen Andolora, she is survived by her children, Peggy Blumer, Susan, Stephen J. and Mark D. Andolora; her brother, Jerry J. Russo; her grandchildren, Stacy Kearney, Dana and Robert Blumer, Jenna, Danielle and Stephen Andolora and her great-grandchildren, Joseph and Matthew.

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AREA EVENTS

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NEW THIS WEEK...

Mohegan Sun Casino bus trip, departing from Nutley at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 15. Six hours of gambling, free buffet, \$10 bet coupon in return and refreshments served each way on the bus. \$25 per person. Call Mildred at 667-8083 or Marie at

256-0499.

A Night at the Racetrack, Saturday, April 5, at 6 p.m. Own transportation or carpool. \$53 per person, which includes dinner at Pegasus, admission and program.

'Last of the Red Hot Lovers' bus trip, starring Charlie Prose, Sunday, April 20, with bus departing Nutley at 1 p.m. Dinner at 2:30 p.m. and show starts at 4 p.m. Departure from Hunterdon Hills Playhouse at 6:15 p.m. \$78 per person. Call Mildred at 667-8083 or Marie at 256-0499.

Fashion show/tricky tray, "April Showers Bring Spring Flowers," presented by St. Anthony's Rosary Altar Society, Sunday, April 27 at 2 p.m. at St. Anthony's School Hall, 25 No. 7th St., Belleville. Spaghetti dinner. \$25 donation.

Belleville High School Class of 1963, 45th reunion planned for Saturday, Sept. 6, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall Council 835, 94-98 Bridge St., Belleville. \$40 per person, which includes a hot buffet, dessert, beer and soda. There will be a cash bar. Bring your favorite CDs. Very casual dress. Contact Angela Cuzzo-Zarro at 759-2703 or e-mail Kathy Bendel at kbendel@aol.com for more info.

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style
1

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style
2

More to say
with BOLD.

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style
3

More to say
with BOLD
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style
4

A bold header
with a graphic.

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style
5

Make a statement! A
bold header with a
border and shading

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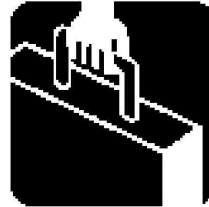
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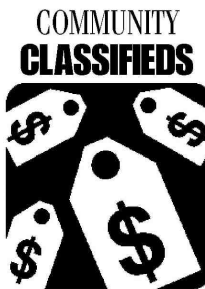
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9	5	7	8	4	2	3	6	1
3	6	2	5	1	7	8	9	4
5	7	4	2	8	6	1	3	9
8	3	6	9	5	1	4	2	7
2	1	9	7	3	4	5	8	6
7	4	3	6	9	8	2	1	5
1	9	5	4	2	3	6	7	8
6	2	8	1	7	5	9	4	3

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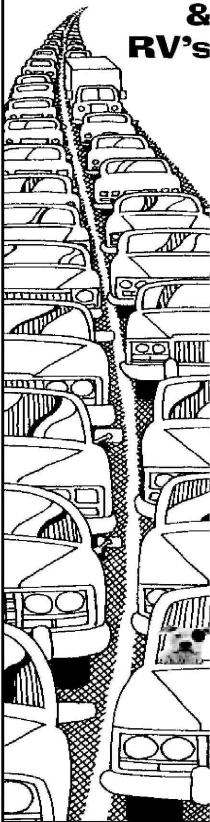
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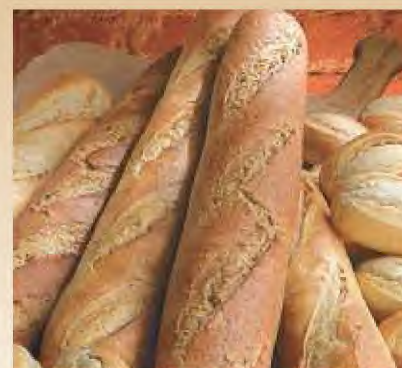
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