

Parking problem at CHS

(Continued from page A-1)

ing would cause improper drainage on the site. "It's a land issue," agreed Superintendent Lawrence Feinsod. "We don't even have enough room for our staff. We just spent \$50,000 to renovate the softball field, so we're certainly not going to make more parking there."

While the school's parking problems have been on the radar for years, no solution has been found. Sgt. Joseph VanBergen said at the Jan. 13 meeting that the situation has been debated since as far back as the 1930s.

The school, built in the 1930s without any land around it, follows an uncommon design, said Feinsod.

"The traditional suburban high school has land around it, and parking for students and staff," he said. "The majority of suburban schools have surrounding fields right on site."

He added that the school was built at a time when Cranford was sociologically a very different place. Most mothers didn't work, he said, and so were available to drive their children to school. In addition, most families only had one car if they had a car at all, and the number of single parent households was much lower. Thus, parking wasn't a consideration.

More recently, young drivers have been restricted in the number of passengers they can carry in their car before they turn 18, effectively eliminating carpooling at a time when there are more teenagers with cars than ever before.

Feinsod said that it is in part because of the increased activity in a typical teenager's day.

"Teenagers are busier now than they've ever been before. They go to jobs, they go to sports. They're very busy and along with that comes mobility," he said.

Board of Education member Camille Widdows,

who has been vocal about students' right to park on the public streets surrounding the school since the beginning, agreed that the lack of parking is an issue, but also said that driving to school is often a necessity.

"Even as a board member, I've had to park on Berkeley Place. There're no spots for visitors," she said.

But she added that more restrictions on the streets surrounding the school will neither solve the decades-old parking situation nor fairly address the legitimate concerns of residents and students about the glut of student vehicles on Berkeley Place.

Widdows pointed out that many students lug heavy bags to school every day — full of heavy books, sports equipment, or musical instruments.

"I really don't think it's fair to tell young people they can't drive just because of their age," said Widdows. "If the state of New Jersey says that the students can drive and if their parents say they can drive, the board is certainly not going to tell them they can't."

School officials also said that even if there was a system they could devise to limit student parking on the streets, they legally wouldn't be able to enforce it.

"We've already been told that we can't legally restrict students from parking on streets if they're public streets," said Feinsod. But, he said, "We can't let the kids need to park somewhere."

However, unlikely it is that the parking problem will be solved by the Board of Education, officials are not out of any future discussions with the township or residents, and they would like to remain active in finding a solution.

"I know the solution is out there," Widdows said. "I don't know if the board can solve it. I think it will take the board, the township, the residents, and the students to make this work."

New chief takes over at fire dept.

(Continued from page A-1)

part of it," he said. "It's not just fighting fires."

Besides helping out a Staten Island fire department immediately following Sept. 11 and staging a Santa ride through town every year, the borough's squad counts bonding with each other and the community high on its list of priorities.

"In the summertime we go over to Washington School once a week and shoot water out of the truck for the kids," he said. "It's just the volunteers doing something for the town."

Bonfanti and the Garwood Fire Squad are looking for volunteers. Interested residents should call the squad's non-emergency phone number at (908) 789-8877 Sunday mornings and Monday nights after 7 p.m., or any other time to leave a message.

The right changes approved Tuesday, which total \$18,775, included various minor electrical and heating additions and refinements, some left out of initial drawings by project engineers and some generated by new orders from inspectors. MKF officials stressed that many of the change orders came as a matter of interpretation of existing thorough safety codes.

So far, there have been approximately \$135,000 in change orders on the renovation project, far less than the approximately \$800,000 bottom-line contingency allowed for unanticipated changes, said Philbin.

But despite those assurances, some residents were skeptical of the continual announcements of new change orders.

"I'm a master plumber and it appears there's an awful lot of code items and it seems to be a lot of interpretation," said resident Bruce Peterson. "I could sit here and agree with you, but it seems like a lot."

Responding to Lincoln School teacher Virginia Hansen's questions about the looks that are not yet working properly on interior and exterior doors to the school, Philbin replied that work on the locks would be completed shortly.

With the completion of the first phase of the project — a new wing at Lincoln School opened after the winter break — Philbin said renovations have begun on phase two of the project, which will include renovations to the gym and science room.

The second phase should be completed by the time the children begin the next school year, he said, with the remaining renovations to Lincoln School being completed by October.

Along with the picture of the smiling Alban, the laundry bins, the kitchen sponges, and the baking racks will go. The quarters of engine oil and the pressure gauges will follow quietly, trailed by the one remaining box of cedar methballs, three varieties of lint brushes, anti-tarnish cream (silver polish) and brass and copper cleaner, door jacks, door pulls, drawer pulls, picture hooks, screws, and for-sale signs.

"Basically I'm semi-retired. I'll be doing my lock work out of my house. Maybe I'll do some work with Weber grills, but I'm not sure. The only thing I'm certain of is that I'm going to have my weekly ends back and a little more time, and hopefully make a decent living."

Generations of Cranford residents have browsed the shelves of the hardware store. When Alban's father and uncle (Martin Alban and Bernard Lewis, respectively) opened up shop in 1945, it had already been a hardware store for a number of years.

In the 1960s, Alban's mother

moved to his current location at 103 North Union, where he has been the past 12 years. James Ward, his landlord, has recently raised the rents significantly enough to warrant a second move.

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For Alban, the customers who stop by regularly to shop or just chat will be missed, along with the connections he has made with the few remaining owners of small area hardware stores over the years, but he plans to keep in touch.

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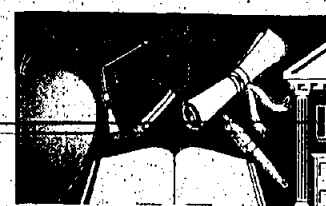
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Little Gym camp has something for every kid

CRANFORD — The Little Gym's Anytime Summer Time Kids Camp lets parents choose which weeks they want their child to attend and which days of the week a child will attend. There are 11 weeks of camp starting June 14 through Sept. 4, and parents can pick three, four or five days per week. Camp runs from 1 to 4 p.m., and The Little Gym is fully air-conditioned.

Each week brings another fun theme such as Karate, Beach, Pets, Wizard, Space and Summer Sports. Kids won't want to miss Light, Stress & Bubbles week, when a police officer, a firefighter and a paramedic squad visit. What child won't love seeing the fire truck? A light snack and a theme-related craft are provided each day of camp.

The Little Gym, located at 620 South Ave., is a non-competitive, curriculum-based gymnastics program offering classes year-round for children aged 4 months to 12 years. The Little Gym's staff is trained to deliver individualized, highly motivational physical, mental and social development in a non-threatening, safe, nurturing environment.

Children increase strength, flexibility, balance, rhythm and motor skills. Nurturing well-rounded children also includes an emphasis on intellectual development such as developing strong listening skills and longer attention spans, reinforcing problem-solving skills and teaching how to follow directions.

Perhaps most important of all, The Little Gym program teaches children to love themselves as they are, that it is okay

to make mistakes and that they should always try to do the best. Each skill learned at The Little Gym is another opportunity for a child to be praised for his or her effort as well as for the successful completion of progressive skills.

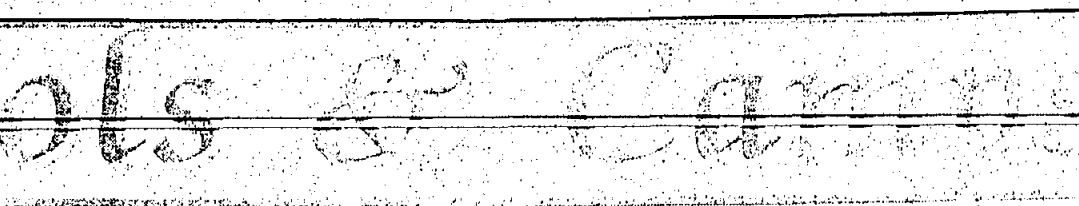
Not every child can be a star athlete. First place, second place and third place typically means that someone came in last place. At The Little Gym every child succeeds because every child is asked to do the best he or she can. Every child can and will succeed because this expectation is applied consistently. Children are encouraged to attempt new challenges at their own pace, so they can experience the thrill of victory with-out over-achieving.

For children who are initially hesitant to take on new challenges, the successes they experience at The Little Gym can increase self-confidence and thereby enable them to take on new challenges which would have been previously overwhelming.

When exercise is fun, children are dramatically more likely to make exercise part of their lifestyle throughout their lives. Each class includes music, gross motor development and lots of social interaction, which build healthy minds and bodies.

In addition to gymnastics, karate, and sports skills programs, The Little Gym has private birthday parties, parent's survival nights (Saturday evenings).

Call The Little Gym at (908) 497-1500 for more information and to schedule a free trial class.



Busy week planned at St. Michael

CRANFORD — St. Michael School on Alden Street will begin its Catholic Schools Week activities on Sunday with an open house at the school from 10 a.m.-noon. Parishioners, school parents and prospective school parents are invited to visit the school Sunday and also take part in the week-long celebration that includes a host of special events.

The open house Sunday will begin with the dedication of the Clara Murphy Library in honor of one of the school's most beloved teachers, who passed away last year.

There will also be a Book Fair offering parents and children a quality selection of interesting books and gifts — this alone is worth a look-see.

In addition, students will be on hand to conduct tours of the facility, which includes the fully equipped gymnasium, lab, media center and library.

During the week, highlights include the Grade 8 Pin Ceremony which takes place during the 9 a.m. Mass. Masses attended by the entire school. Tuesday features the "Jump Rope for Heart," a fundraiser for the American Heart Association and a fun-raiser for the students.

On Wednesday night, the Annual Student Talent show goes on at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. This month is the most fun event of the year for parents and family; anything can and does happen at this show. The students' "hidden" talents are put on stage for all to enjoy.

Rounding out the Catholic Schools Week celebration on Thursday is the eighth grade academic presentation program where soon-to-graduate students give presentations to the lower grades on a variety of interesting topics. Thursday also is an all-school "Pin Day" — one day for pins, the other for green and white casual — with all proceeds going to the Red Cross. South District.

On Friday, a Religion Day will be held and all winners will be awarded certificates of merit. Friday is also Staff Appreciation Day.

More information on all of these events can be obtained by calling the school at (908) 276-9125 or by visiting the St. Michael School website at www.stmichael-cranford.com.

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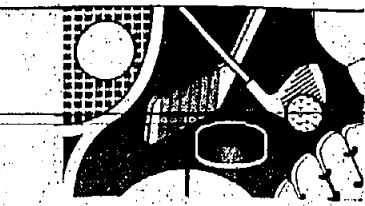
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Busy week planned at St. Michael

CRANFORD — St. Michael School on Alden Street will begin its Catholic Schools Week activities on Sunday with an open house at the school from 10 a.m.-noon. Parishioners, school parents and prospective school parents are invited to visit the school Sunday and also take part in the week-long celebration that includes a host of special events.

The open house Sunday will begin with the dedication of the Clara Murphy Library in honor of one of the school's most beloved teachers, who passed away last year.

There will also be a Book Fair offering parents and children a quality selection of interesting books and gifts — this alone is worth a look-see.

In addition, students will be on hand to conduct tours of the facility, which includes the fully equipped gymnasium, lab, media center and library.

During the week, highlights include the Grade 8 Pin Ceremony which takes place during the 9 a.m. Mass. Masses attended by the entire school. Tuesday features the "Jump Rope for Heart," a fundraiser for the American Heart Association and a fun-raiser for the students.

On Wednesday night, the Annual Student Talent show goes on at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. This month is the most fun event of the year for parents and family; anything can and does happen at this show. The students' "hidden" talents are put on stage for all to enjoy.

Rounding out the Catholic Schools Week celebration on Thursday is the eighth grade academic presentation program where soon-to-graduate students give presentations to the lower grades on a variety of interesting topics. Thursday also is an all-school "Pin Day" — one day for pins, the other for green and white casual — with all proceeds going to the Red Cross. South District.

On Friday, a Religion Day will be held and all winners will be awarded certificates of merit. Friday is also Staff Appreciation Day.

More information on all of these events can be obtained by calling the school at (908) 276-9125 or by visiting the St. Michael School website at www.stmichael-cranford.com.

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Briefs

Rock history lecture at Cranford library

CRANFORD — The Friends of the Cranford Public Library will sponsor a music history appreciation lecture on the Beatles by guest lecturer Vincent Bruno. The program will be held 7:30 p.m. Feb. 5 in the multi-media room. Admission is free.

Bruno is a record collector and a rock historian whose major concentration is on the Beatles and the 1960s. A teacher on the university level, Bruno has recently developed a Beatles lecture series, "From Liverpool to Abbey Road," and has lectured extensively at public libraries and colleges throughout the metropolitan area.

Garwood Knights plan a blood drive

GARWOOD — The Garwood Knights of Columbus will hold a blood drive 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Council Hall at 37 South Ave. (across from Pathmark). The library is available behind the building on Willow Avenue.

For more information, call (908) 789-9809, after 4 p.m.

Cranford library has stamps for sale

CRANFORD — The Cranford Public Library is now selling postage stamps. Standard 37-cent stamps are available at the main desk in booklets of 20 for \$7.40. Payment must be in cash.

The library is open 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

READY applications are now available

CRANFORD — Cranford Public Schools offer an inclusive preschool program called READY.

The READY program is a regular education preschool program that places children with special needs with their typical peers.

Entry into the READY program is based on a lottery. This year, the lottery will be conducted on Feb. 9.

Applications for the READY program will be available at the main offices at the elementary schools in district. If you would like your child to be included in the lottery for possible placement into the READY program, please complete the application and return it by Feb. 2 to Mrs. JoAnn Jackson, 60 Orange Ave. School, 901 Orange Ave.

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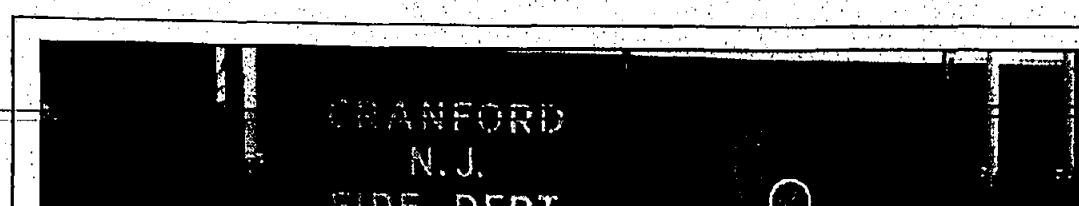
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County Historical Society meets next week in Cranford

CRANFORD — The Anne Pettigrew of Hillsdale, a tea expert, will talk about the history of tea drinking and various teas now available at the first meeting of 2004 of the Union County Historical Society to be held 2:30 p.m. Feb. 1, at the Hanson House at 38 Springfield Ave. Pettigrew has worked for several tea companies.

The meeting also will include the selection of six secondary schools in Union County where the society's annual history award will be awarded June 6 at the Fellowship Hall in the Presbyterian Church at 38 Springfield Ave.

The students will be chosen by the school personnel.

The Union County Historical Society will celebrate its 135th anniversary at 3 p.m. April 4.

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Golden Nuggets SENIORS

CRANFORD — The Cranford Senior Citizens Thursday Club meets 1 p.m. at the Community Center, 220 Walnut Ave. Activities: Jan. 22 — Buncos.

Representatives from Senior Tours will speak about upcoming 2004 trips.

Trips sponsored by the Thursday Club (the public is welcome): Jan. 27 — to Caesar's in Atlantic City; a similar trip is held the last Tuesday of every month. To register for the casino trips, call (908) 272-6328.

April 25-May 1 — to Myrtle Beach. \$850/dp per person includes lodging at oceanfront hotel, 12 meals, three shows, and a sightseeing cruise down a coastal waterway.

Aug. 6-19 — to Yellowstone National Park, Mount Rushmore, and the Grand Tetons. The cost is \$1892 per person, double occupancy. Includes 27 meals.

Aug. 21-Sept. 7 — to the Canadian Rockies including Banff, Glacier National Park, Icefields Parkway. The cost is \$2380 per person, double occupancy.

Oct. 21-26 — to Bar Harbor, Maine. The cost is \$727 per person, double occupancy. Accommodations are at the Bar Harbor Inn directly on Frenchman Bay. Included are 10 meals, deluxe motorcoach with escort on board at all times.

For more information on the extended trips, call (908) 272-5375 for more information on all trips.

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Commentary

Tinkering at the edges

Gov. James E. McGreevey's State of the State address was the opening act in his re-election campaign.

The governor made sure everyone knew the accomplishments of his administration's first two years. And some of those accomplishments — balancing budgets, implementing tougher environmental standards, preserving open space — are laudable, though they often have been overlooked because of the administration's fumbling over political appointments.

But the speech lacked a dynamic vision for the future. McGreevey did not present any bold vision for the future. And though it's the most important issue on the minds of New Jersey residents, McGreevey did not offer any sweeping vision to reform the property tax system.

Instead, McGreevey just nibbled at the problem. The governor said "the status quo on school and local government property taxes cannot continue." That's a good start, but the measures he proposed may only affect a small number of New Jersey residents.

He called for the elimination of 23 school districts "that don't even operate a single school." That's fine, but it's not going to save a substantial amount of money.

The governor is also requiring the 172 districts with only one building to find ways to consolidate services.

But those measures are only relevant to a third of the state's districts, most of which are in sparsely populated rural areas.

The governor also said school districts should be rewarded for reducing administrative costs. That's a laudable goal, but the effort has to start with the Legislature and the Department of Education who are constantly shipping more and more red tape and unfunded mandates to local school districts.

The last part of this feeble plan to reduce property taxes is "detailing additional measures to towns, school districts and county governments that require them to deliver services and purchase products together." That's a good idea — so good that many public bodies are already doing it.

The governor's approach to reforming the property tax system is disappointing. The recipients of property taxes — counties, municipalities and school districts — have been fortunate in recent years, the overwhelming boom in residential property values has maintained a stream of revenue to compensate for freezes in state aid. But that may not last forever; the underlying structural deficiencies and inequities of the system will remain.

Momentum had started to rise last year for a state Constitutional convention convened just to solve the property tax problem. McGreevey could have made a courageous move by joining the chorus calling for that. Instead, like his predecessors, he has settled for making just minor changes that may have some cosmetic advantages for a re-election campaign, but do not address the real problem.

Recovering Dr. King's legacy

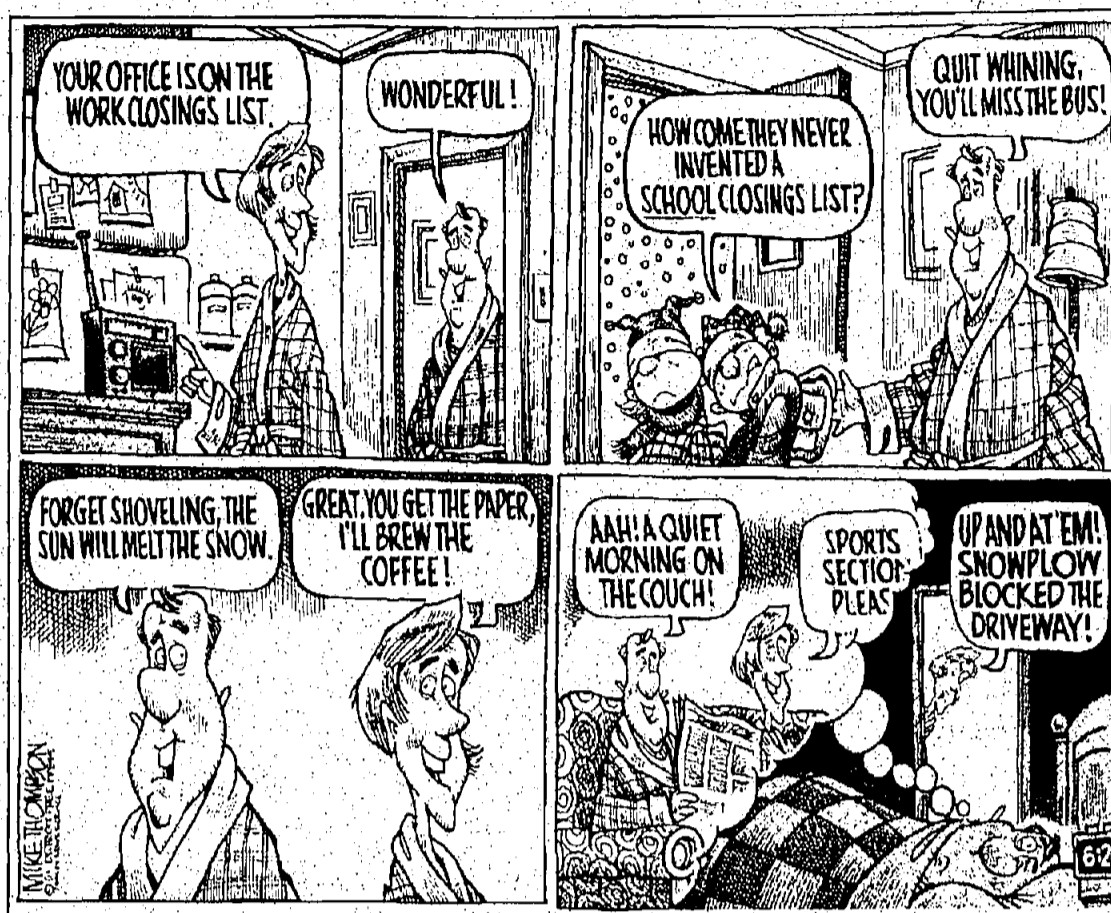
On Monday this country celebrated the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., perhaps the most influential American of the second half of the 20th century. Yet, aside from the stock market and government offices being closed and a scattering of stories in the media, there was too little to separate Monday from the other drab days of January.

That's unfortunate. The legacy left by Dr. King should never be underestimated or forgotten. It is unacceptable to a younger generation that just 50 years ago segregation was the rule in many parts of this country. African Americans were forced to sit at the rear of the bus and to drink from separate water fountains. They were not allowed to stay at many hotels, and they were refused service at many restaurants. This country's treatment of its own citizens was truly shameful.

The courage demonstrated by Dr. King and his followers brought about the most sweeping change in this country's history. Centuries of injustice ended with historic Supreme Court rulings often enforced by federal troops and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Most of these changes were prompted by Dr. King's insistence on nonviolent protest; the peaceful demonstrations that he led delivered the message to all Americans that all men are created equal and more importantly, should be treated equally. And Dr. King never gave up the struggle, despite the ugly hatred of ignorant racists and the despicable and inexcusable harassment by a rogue FBI.

Dr. King's achievements should not go unappreciated. By achieving equal rights for African-Americans, he made all of our lives better. Though his life was tragically ended by an assassin's bullet, the struggle for racial justice continued. And it continues to this day. There is still too much racism and intolerance in this country and the stench of discrimination still lingers.

To properly remember Dr. King, we should dedicate ourselves once again to the principles he espoused — the pursuit of justice for all through nonviolent means. That dedication should be the root of how we celebrate this national holiday.



Letters to the editor

Community rallied to aid family

To The Chronicle:

On Christmas Eve, I was startled awake by the sound of the smoke detectors going off. I discovered the living room chimney and hurried to get five children out of the house and call 911. Now that the "smoke has settled," I want to take a minute to thank both the Cranford Police Department, specifically Officer Andrews and Officer Stuping, and the Cranford Fire Department for their immediate response and quick action to extinguish the fire and save my house.

If this kind of incident were to happen to anyone, I wish this same outcome I had. No one was injured, the damage can be repaired and I have a new appreciation for my neighbors. A special thank to the

Merhengens, who literally gave me the slippers off their feet, the Loves, who took my children and pets into their home while the fire department worked, and the Insulegers, who stayed with me. Everyone should be blessed with these neighbors.

Finally, a big thank you to the boys and families of the Cranford varsity and JV hockey teams. Their support of JJ and their generosity to my family will always be held in a special place. I know this was a special group of boys before Dec. 24, but they have a way of showing it over and over again.

Bless them all.

CHERYL HOFFLER
Cranford

Garwood's always been a great place

To The Chronicle:

This letter is in response to the letter by Francesca Florio that recently appeared in your newspaper.

I am a lifelong Garwood resident. Five generations of my family have lived on the same street for 60 years, and my father was born on Anchor Place over 70 years ago. I find Ms. Florio's comments about "bygone years" of people "living next door to the same person for 50 years" to be highly insulting.

Living next door to the same person for 50 years plays a large part in the creation of the "small-town charm" with which she says she is in love. Small towns are all about families who stay in a place for generations along with an extended family of friends and neighbors (living close by). It's all about community and continuity.

Ms. Florio also speaks of "lower taxes" as belonging to this "bygone" era. Well, let's put it this way — if lower taxes were the concern only of a "bygone" era, why are they a selling point when someone is looking to make a home purchase? And why are rising property taxes viewed as such a serious problem by leaders at state and local levels? Do you think these lawmakers consider complaints about this matter to be "trivial"? The bottom line: Your property values may be increasing, but if your taxes increase too much, you're not going to be able to sell your home. What do you think happened in Plainfield and Roselle, just to mention two examples?

She goes on to mention how wonderful it is to have a new school nearby. It's only an addition and argues people not to "cling" to the "bygone years" of "outdated schools." The implication here is that a new building

Finding hidden treasure in Cranford

To The Chronicle:

There is a little known treasure hiding in the Cranford United Methodist Church. It is a wonderful place where children are taught, cared for and nurtured by an extraordinary woman. That woman possesses a gentle spirit, a wonderful rapport with children in addition to the rare gifts of patience and understanding.

She is Nancy Boyle and her wonderful school, Miss Nancy's Learning Center Tiny Tim's Playland, has proven to be an incredible stepping stone for my children and I'm sure for countless other children who have had the privilege of having Miss Nancy as their introduction into school life.

I found out about Miss Nancy through my sister who had seen her advertisement in a local paper and sent her son Tommy to Miss Nancy's Learning Center. Just as many other parents I have spoken with in past years, she had nothing but praise and admiration for Miss Nancy's teaching style.

My son, Nicholas, started in the 3-year-old afternoon class. He was a shy, frightened little guy who I thought would have a terrible time adjusting. Miss

Nancy was able to gently draw him out with her unique blend of patience, gentleness and wisdom. He started off the school year clinging to my leg but with Miss Nancy's nurturing, Nicholas ended the school year running down the hall with excitement every morning to greet the new school day. Needless to say, Miss Nancy helped make Nick's transition into kindergarten and then full-day school a smooth one. He is now a successful second-grader who still talks about and misses his days with Miss Nancy.

Miss Nancy is now teaching my younger son Robert. He is in her 4-year-old class and is flourishing under the care and guidance of Miss Nancy and Mrs. Sue.

I join many other parents in expressing our sincere gratitude to Miss Nancy for all the little lives she has touched. She is truly like a gardener in God's garden, and all her dedication and love have made a numerous variety of "little buds" blossom into beautiful flowers. Miss Nancy, you are truly a blessing and a treasure in our community. Thank you!

CATERINA RETCHCO
Westfield

The Chronicle is here for you

The following information should help you get your ideas and community news into The Chronicle:

Call Editor Gregory Marx at (732) 396-4219 with story suggestions, questions or comments. For sports, call Daniel Murphy at (732) 396-4202. Our address: The Chronicle, 301 Central Ave., Clark, NJ, 07066. Our fax number is (732) 574-2613. Our e-mail address is union@njpublishing.com.

Deadlines

The deadline for submitting articles and press releases to The Chronicle is 5 p.m. Friday. The deadline for submitting letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday.

Jersey Boy

Mike Deak

Stopping at the cemetery on a snowy evening

Saturday was the first anniversary of my father's death, and I decided to visit the Neshanic Cemetery to place fresh roses in the drifted snow at the base of his headstone.

It was a calm, silent mid-winter day, mercifully milder than the vicious cold of Thursday and Friday. The sky had that unique winter look as the first wispy clouds from Sunday's storm crawled up the horizon.

Thankfully there was no wind; the cemetery lies on a minor ridge of Sourland Mountain and from this corner of the cemetery, you can see nothing but the rolling farmland that folds down to the South Branch of the Raritan River. You cannot see the 21st century.

The Neshanic Cemetery is a special place, the junction of the past and present, the living and the dead. Directly behind my father's grave is the headstone of my great-grandfather. My grandparents are not far away and also nearby are aunts, uncles, cousins and all those other neighbors whose souls have departed Neshanic Station.

Sometimes I visit the cemetery by myself. Of course I go to pay my respects and honor memories. But sometimes I just visit the cemetery to try and find myself in the continuum of mortality and immortality. The silent presence of death and the joy of those remembered lives provide a frame of reference for reflection. But, given its somber purpose, the cemetery's probably not a good place to think about regrets and wasted opportunities.

British poet Thomas Gray captured the moody atmosphere in his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." In the 18th century (the 18th) when my mother's family first came to Somerset, Country and rode along Annwell Road at the entrance of the cemetery.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid "Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire," "Drinks that rod of empire might have sundered," "Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

Sterile January days in cemeteries are depressing enough without the burden of flooding. Perhaps a younger friend is right — like T.S. Eliot's Prufrock, I overanalyze everything; it's the writer's curse. I am jealous of those, like my friend, who are still spontaneous and are daring to take risks. I want to feed off their freedom and liberate myself from the restrictions of a life's balanced book. Do I really need to find my place in time's continuum? Is it really worth the taking of a tea and toast?

Perhaps I should heed these lines from another Eliot poem: "Time past and time future 'What might have been and what has been' 'Point to one end, which is always present.'"

Loosely translated, there's no time like the present to get your act in gear.

From their blessed peace the dead in the Neshanic Cemetery offer comfort. When they were alive they protected me from evil and introduced me to the good. And they still have lessons to teach that I must make every effort to remember, like my father telling me never to bridle abruptly on a freshly-fallen snow. You must keep going. If you feel something bad is going to happen, ease off the accelerator. You must always keep going. I remembered that late Saturday night as I drove over dangerous, freshly-fallen snow on endless country roads back home to a good night.

WILL THE UNITED STATES LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL MARS MISSION IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS?



LISA MANDELBLATT
Westfield
Probably. If we waste all that money, sure.



FRANK PEISHPALAJ
Assistant Store Manager,
Kings in Garwood
Yes, of course — this is America.



SUSAN LIEBLACH
Fairwood
In our dreams. I don't think that right now our government is as committed to outer space as it is to the current world situation.



ANNETTE WACLOM
Cranford
Oh sure, definitely. Since we've progressed so far now I think in 10 years people will be interested in doing that.



GENE BRENDL
Kings Employee
Ten years? No. I just don't see it going that far, moneywise.

Ferguson visits U.S. troops in Iraq

By LESLIE A. SCOTT
STAFF WRITER

For Rep. Mike Ferguson, the best part of his whirlwind trip to Iraq last weekend was sharing dinner in a mess hall with the troops assigned there and meeting others in the hospital.

Ferguson said he made the trip because he wanted to thank the men and women who were serving in the war zone. "I wanted to personally look them in the eye and tell them how much we appreciated their sacrifice."

The troops were upbeat, Ferguson said, and he met a few from New Jersey. Morale was good in a sense that these were servicemen and women who are deeply committed to their mission and the reasons why they were there. Many of them were very much looking forward to getting home.

He also brought the troops some cards that were made by fourth- and fifth-graders at the Ernest J. Fazio-Albano School in Roselle Park.

Ferguson also said he wanted to see where the tax dollars are being spent on the reconstruction efforts.

The Iraqi infrastructure needs to be rebuilt, Ferguson said. The work, which includes repairing transportation networks, health-care facilities and schools, presents a lot of challenges.

Making sure that the Iraqis have work is also extremely important, said Ferguson. Without stable employment opportunities, someone could be paid to perform a terrorist act, he said.

The congressman left the states Wednesday night and arrived in Jordan on Thursday, where he visited the Jordanian International Police Training Center. The facility is run by Americans, but the training is done by Jordanians.

Ferguson said that Iraq is going to need 100,000 police officers. About a third of them will have completed their training by the end of the year, he said.

He traveled to Baghdad on Friday and stayed at Camp Victory, located in a palace that was owned by Saddam Hussein.

While there, he spoke with the Green Endward, the U.S. ambassador to Jordan, and Richard Jones, the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait.

Ferguson was briefed on the military and on the progress of the

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Police Log

CRANFORD

Vasiliou, Elizabeth, 25, of Roselle was arrested Jan. 13 when police pulled him over on South Avenue at about 9:22 p.m.

He was charged with possession of marijuana, having a controlled dangerous substance in his vehicle, and having improper window tinting.

A Linden man was arrested after police arrived at the scene of a motor vehicle accident at about 7:50 p.m. Friday.

Greg Major, 28, was arrested at the scene of the accident near the corner of Raritan Road and Walnut Avenue and charged with driving while intoxicated, driving with no insurance, and careless driving. There were no injuries in the two-car accident.

Martin Parker, 39, of East Orange, was charged with driving while intoxicated and careless driving after he was stopped by police on North Avenue at about 4:30 a.m. Sunday.

Marek Gill, 28, of Cranford, was charged with driving while intoxicated and careless driving after he was stopped by police at Raritan Road at about 1:34 a.m. Sunday.

KENILWORTH

A Coolidge Drive resident reported that the window of his motor vehicle was broken during the night of Jan. 12.

A Metuchen woman who owed the borough \$1,000 in active warrants was arrested by Kenilworth police at about 2:45 p.m. Jan. 14.

Laura Fautore was apprehended after Somerset County police officers alerted the Kenilworth Police Department that she was under arrest in Somerset County. Fautore was transferred to the Union County Jail.

Kenilworth police arrested Puquan Sims, a resident of Newark, after Newark police informed the department they had him in their custody at about 12:55 p.m. Friday.

Sims had active criminal warrants out of Kenilworth for \$500. He was later transferred to the Union County Jail.

An unknown suspect reportedly tried to break into Greco Roma Pizzeria and Grill sometime Friday night. Police are investigating.

A company vehicle belonging to Glass Pak Inc. was reportedly burglarized Monday. An employee's driver's license was also reported stolen at the time.

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Cranford Chronicle

Since 1971

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The event will help raise funds that will be used to grant the wishes of New Jersey children with life-threatening medical conditions. Founded in 1983, the New Jersey chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted more than 3,500 wishes to local children.

Hyatt Hills Golf Course, located on the Cranford/Clark border, has initiated an unlimited golf plan for the entire year.

All golfers who sign up prior to March 15 will receive, in addition to the season pass, two free cart fees, a free all-season private locker and 20 range tokens.

For avid golfers, this offer presents an opportunity for an economical and enjoyable year of golf.

Tickets for the entire year are: Cranford and Clark residents, \$1,400; New Jersey residents, \$1,600; out-of-state residents, \$2,500. The season passes are for sole use on the nine-hole course, located on Raritan Road between Walnut and Central avenues.

Hyatt Hills provides a challenge for players of all levels. Its ample teeing areas permit multiple tee markers, allowing the course yardage to range from approximately 2,494 yards to 3,220.

A 5.4-acre pond provides spectacular views and a challenging water hazard on hole seven, the signature hole. The course consists of two par-3 holes, five par-4s and two par-5s, with paved golf cart paths trailing throughout.

The driving range includes 40 stations, 11 of which are covered and heated. Private and group lessons are available for all ages.

The beautifully-landscaped miniature golf course, known as Mt. Hyatt, boasts three picturesque waterfalls, winding streams and stepping ponds. There are 18 holes, 9 of which are handicapped-accessible. The course is easily accessible for children and families. It is also available for birthday parties and other special occasions.

Hyatt Hills Golf Complex is also a premiere center for all types of golf outings for businesses, charities and fundraisers.

The clubhouse includes a pro shop, locker and shower facilities, meeting rooms and a first class restaurant/banquet hall overlooking the course.

Hyatt Hills also has on premises a professional golf club maker who can show residents how to improve their game. Tom Murphy, professional clubmaker, and Greg Roast, pro clubmaker and pro golf instructor, have helped hundreds of people, from casual golfers to tour professionals, shave strokes off their game.

For more information, visit www.hyathills.com or call (732) 669-9100.

On the signature par-3 seventh hole at Hyatt Hills Golf Course, players must clear this pond to reach the green. New for the coming year, area residents can purchase a season pass that entitles them to unlimited use of the course.

NJIO pauses for a 'Winter Interlude'

The New Jersey Interregional Orchestra (NJIO) will perform a free concert, "Winter Interlude," 7 p.m. Sunday at Cranford High School.

Featuring a mix of classical and popular tunes, the concert will include both the full orchestra and chamber groups. Selections will include the "Ashken Farewell" from the Ken Burns documentary "The Civil War," the "Russian Easter Overture," the theme from "Schindler's List," the "Brandenburg Concerto #5" and a medley of John Lennon and Paul McCartney songs.

In addition, Cranford residents and composer Mario Lombardo will introduce his original composition "Winter Frolic." And soprano Jamie Rae Peterson will be the featured soloist in "He Shall Feed His Flock" from Handel's Messiah.

One of America's most unique ensembles, the New Jersey Interregional Orchestra is composed of more than 100 musicians ranging in age from 6 to 93. Founded by Lorraine Marks in 1994, NJIO has performed at the World Conference on Aging in Cranford, Spain, the United Nations, Lincoln Center, Fountain Plaza, the Generations United Conference in Washington, D.C., and other venues in New Jersey. Media coverage has included features on CBS and NBC and in The New York Times as well as in such magazines as Family Circle, American Profiles and Savvy Living.

NJIO's mission is to bridge the generations through a common love of music. By bringing the different ages together, it promotes mutual growth and understanding through the language and experience of music.

Folk Art Show is back

The Country Folk Art Show returns to the New Jersey Convention and Expo Center this weekend. Admission is \$7. Show hours are: Friday 3-9 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and one adult admission is valid for show re-entry all weekend.

Since colonial times, Americans have valued quality and tradition. Country Folk Art Shows, Inc. carries on these values and traditions of quality, handcrafted folk art, featuring of

the best craftsmanship, materials and techniques. Country Folk Art Shows, Inc. has developed a following of artisans from across the nation and Canada eager to participate in these shows. Every participant is juried and hand-selected for outstanding workmanship and integrity of creative design.

More than 200 of the top quality artists and exhibitors will offer thousands of items, all displayed and sold in three-sided country room setting booths.



Conductor Howard Toplansky and the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Concert Band will perform a benefit show this Sunday in Warren.

NJWA Concert Band plays a benefit show this Sunday

The New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Concert Band will perform a benefit concert 2 p.m. Sunday at the Watchung Hills Regional High School, located at 108 Stirling Rd. in Warren. The two-hour concert will feature soloist Ryan Salmon on piccolo.

"We are pleased to be working with Shelia Duyckinck, a volunteer, who has devoted many hours to assisting the Watchung Arts Center in its aspirations," said conductor Howard Toplansky. The show, which will benefit the Watchung Arts Center, had been originally set for December but due to inclement weather was rescheduled.

Toplansky, director of the NJWA Concert Band and author of "Essentials of Bassoon Technique," established the Concert Band eight years ago.

In only a few short years, the band has grown to almost 80 members and has played concerts in a variety of venues. The band boasts an impressive array of talent who come from Union, Westfield, Scotch Plains, Roselle, Edison, Mountainside, Dunellen, Warren, and Basking Ridge. The band is composed of professionals, including a biochemist, an engineer, and an accountant as well as students who are in third grade right up to college level.

"At least 20,000 people in Union County alone have studied an instrument at one time in their lives. Our Concert Band gives them the opportunity to return to playing," said Toplansky.

While they are available for regular public concerts, the NJWA Concert Band is committed to the concept of benefit concerts as well. Long proponents of giving back to the community, Toplansky and the Concert Band have helped a variety of organizations in various fund raising efforts. Funds have been raised to assist Toplansky, which aids overseas children in need of

CDC will take a trip to Smokey Joe's Café

The Cranford Dramatic Club invites residents to pull up a chair at "Smokey Joe's Café," the troupe's winter musical production, which opens Feb. 6. This show, which won the 1995 Tony Award for Best Musical, ran for more than 2,000 performances on Broadway and features nearly 40 Leiber and Stoller classics sure to take theatergoers back to a golden age of American pop culture.

Standards such as "Stand By Me," "Loving You," "Kansas City," "Hound Dog," "There Goes My Baby," "Love Potion #9" and others explore the classic themes of love, loss, lust and imagination, all in an idealized 1950s setting.

Topped off with electrifying choreography and accompanied by a seven-piece band of outstanding musicians, these numbers will get audience members' toes tapping and fingers snapping.

The show is directed by Shayne Austin Miller and produced by Liz Howard, with vocal direction by Tracy Glenn Murray. This is the production team that put together CDC's much-praised production of "South Pacific" two years ago. Along with choreographer Debra Kassin and

"We have a talented cast and great costumes, and we are sure that this will be an entertaining and fun way for folks to spend an evening."

— Shayne Austin Miller, director

band director Mitch Kolesaire, the team has been working since last winter to assure another hit production. They have assembled a cast of talented singers/dancers perfectly suited to bring out the sizzle-of-life emotions of the show's classic tunes.

Miller said of the show, "Everyone loves a musical and what's wonderful about this show is that the songs are all so recognizable. We have a talented cast and great costumes, and we are sure that this will be an entertaining and fun way for folks to spend an evening."

The cast consists of Molly Prier of Cranford, Tracy Haskell of Garwood, Regina Styles of Hawthorne, Nicole Scavone of South Plainfield, Tamara Valdes of Hackensack, Ryan Connelly of Livingston, Jeffrey Fiorello of Wayne, Jeffrey Foote of Wharton, and Kevin Gardner and Brian Whitford, both of Bloomfield. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays Feb. 6-21, all at 8 p.m. Tickets are available by calling the CDC box office at (908) 276-7611.

The Cranford Dramatic Club is located at 78 Winans Ave. in Cranford, off of Centennial Avenue near Exit 136 of the Garden State Parkway.



AVIAD HAIMI-COHEN QIAOZI YANG

Area teens featured in Showcase Sunday

The impressive talents of classic musicians 16 years of age and under will be the main focus when Crescent Concerts presents its annual Showcase for Exceptional Young Artists 3 p.m. Sunday in the great Gothic sanctuary of Plainfield's Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Participants chosen through auditions include Aviad Haimi-Cohen of Springfield, guitar; Robert Tsai of Millington, piano; Sofia Novick of North Plainfield, cello; Qiaozi Yang of Westfield, piano; Lauren Sulz of Bridgewater, flute; and Tiffany Chu of Bridgewater, piano.

This Crescent event, featuring bright, young classical talent, is one of the few musical exhibitions in Central New Jersey designed to be a true "showcase" rather than a competition. Entrants are chosen from among many who each year anticipate selection and yet another chance to demonstrate their musical abilities and the future of classical music to a large audience.

Aviad Haimi-Cohen, a native of Jerusalem, attends Newark Academy. Aviad, who discovered the guitar four years ago while attending summer camp, has studied with Rob Heimann and Anton del Forno and has participated in master classes taught by Roland Dyens, David Lescar and Julian Gray in addition to classical guitar. Aviad also enjoys playing guitar in other musical styles including rock, blues, jazz, funk and fusion. For this performance, Aviad will play works of Albeniz, Villa-Lobos, Lauro, Tarrega and Dyens. Qiaozi Yang, who is 16 and a junior at Westfield High School, has studied piano for 11 years under four different teachers. She began lessons in China with her pre-school teacher at age 4. At age 7, after moving to Indiana, she switched to Chun Chi An, a faculty member at Indiana University's music department. Four years ago, Qiaozi moved to New Jersey, where she began to take more interest in piano under the tutelage of Sandra Fannum. During the 2001-02 school year, she studied simultaneously with Dorothy Taubman.

Qiaozi has been active in a number of competitions including the 1999 Andrew George De Grand Piano Competition, at which she won in her age category and performed her solo at a concert in Morristown. In 2001, she was a semifinalist in the NJSO Young Artist Auditions and was selected to participate in the 2002 New York Philharmonic Young Artists Competition.

She earned first place in the duo category for the 2002 Music Educators Association piano competition and performed at the MEA Winner's Recitals in February 2003. She has also taken a master class with Lillian Kallir after succeeding in the 2001 MEA Young Artist Master Class auditions.

For concert information or directions to the church, call the Crescent Ave. Presbyterian Church office at (908) 756-2468 weekdays 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

what to do!

Theater

Circle Players

416 Victoria Ave., Piscataway
(732) 968-7555
www.circleplayers.com

"Painting Churches," comedy by Tina Howe. 8 p.m. Jan. 23, 24. Admission \$13 opening night, \$12 Saturday and other Fridays, \$11 Sunday. Discounts available.

Crossroads Theatre

7 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick
(877) STATE 11
www.state11nj.org

"Manogot," the journey, gospel-flavor drama. 8 p.m. Jan. 23, 3 and 8 p.m. Jan. 24 and 7:30 p.m. Jan. 25. Admission \$30; group rates available.

George Street Playhouse

9 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick
(732) 246-7717; www.georgestreetplayhouse.org

"Agnes of God," religious-flavored thriller by John Pielmeier. To Feb. 1, 2 p.m. Jan. 23 and 7:30 p.m. Jan. 24. Admission \$45-\$28; discounts available. Call for showtimes.

Paper Mill Playhouse

Brookside Dr., Millburn
(973) 376-4343; www.papermill.org

"The Tale of the Allegory's Wife," New Jersey premiere of comedy by Charles Busch. To Feb. 8. Admission \$57-\$30; discounts available. Call for showtimes.

State Theatre

15 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick
(877) STATE 11; www.state11nj.org

"Kiss Me Kate," touring production of Broadway musical. 8 p.m. Jan. 16, 3 and 8 p.m. Jan. 17. Admission \$52-\$22.

Coming Up

PHILIP J. LEVIN THEATRE
Rutgers University, 85 George St., New Brunswick

(732) 932-7511; mgsa.rutgers.edu
"Five Gentlemen of Verona," Shakespeare comedy. 8 p.m. Jan. 31, Feb. 7; 2 p.m. Feb. 1. Admission \$20-\$10.

Events

COUNTRY FOLK ART SHOW
New Jersey Convention Center, Raritan Center, Edison

(732) 417-1400; www.countryfolkarts.org

Winter edition of touring craft show. 9-9 p.m. Jan. 23, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Jan. 24, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Jan. 25. Adults \$7; children under 10 \$2.

The Fly Fishing Show

Garden State Exhibit Center, 1-287 Exit 10, Somerset
(800) 420-7582; www.theflyfishingshow.com

For the fisherman getting caught on the fly: 10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Jan. 23, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Jan. 24, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Jan. 25. Adults \$12, children under 12 \$2; multi-day passes available.

NorthEast Motorcycle Expo

Garden State Exhibit Center, 1-287 Exit 10, Somerset
(877) BLKEXP; www.nemotorcycleexpo.com

Another high-loquax event in Central Jersey. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Jan. 31, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Feb. 1. Adults \$15; children under 12 \$5.

Concerts

KIRILL GERSTEIN
2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25

"The Tale of the Allegory's Wife," Crossroads Theatre, 7 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick
(877) STATE 11; www.state11nj.org

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Headlining the monthly singer-song-writer showcase, Admission \$10.

MIL KWON/SCOTT ST. JOHN
8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30
Watchung Arts Center, Watchung Circle, Watchung
(908) 753-0190; www.watchungarts.org

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Headlining the monthly singer-song-writer showcase, Admission \$10.

(732) 932-7237; www.zimmermuseum.rutgers.edu

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Shelia Marban with silk monotypes, noon Jan. 24.

"Dance, Celebrity and Science," 3 p.m. Jan. 24.

Art songs with Marielaine Mammon, 1 p.m. Feb. 1.

"The Musical Book Talk" with Judy Freeman, 3 p.m. Feb. 1.

"Viva St. Petersburg" images of the Russian city, to Feb. 1.

"Newer Games" 120th anniversary, Rutgers Archives for Printmaking Studios), to March 21.

Soviet "nonconformist" art, to March 21.

"Something to Treasure" in children's book art, Jan. 24-April 18.

"Public Appearances: Manipulating Images of Power," Jan. 25-June 27.

Galleries

MASON GROSS GALLERIES
Rutgers University, 33 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick

(732) 932-2222; mgsa.rutgers.edu

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

"Refraction" to Feb. 5.

SWAIN GALLERIES
703 Watchung Ave., Plainfield

(908) 756-1707

Open 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday.

Christmas miniatures, to Jan. 30.

WATCHUNG ARTS CENTER
Watchung Circle, Watchung

(908) 753-0190; www.watchungarts.org

Open 1-4 p.m. Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

"Canyon Symphonies" by Chuan-Day Yu, to Jan. 24.

Works by Heshi Yu, to Jan. 24.

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CWF program helps resolutions come true

SCOTCH PLAINS — Haven't yet started that New Year's Resolution? The Healthstart Program at The Center for Women & Families will get you focused for success.

Improved diet and exercise is the number one New Year's Resolution. A fresh New Year always seems like the perfect time to refocus on those goals and begin taking actions for positive change. Statistics indicate that 80 percent of people who have such good intentions. Come learn how to make good choices without sacrifice.

Confront old habits and conquer once that you can live with and enjoy by joining CWF for this informal, interactive Healthstart seminar. This program includes diet compar-

nutrition with a hectic lifestyle, meal planners and food charts. The seminar will be held by Patricia Davidson of the Cardiovascular Care Group in Scotch Plains and will take place 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23. There is a \$10 fee for this program. Register by calling The Center for Women and Families in Scotch Plains at (908) 322-6007. The program will be held at the center's headquarters at 1801 Main St.

The Center for Women and Families (CWF), a United Way agency, also offers affordable individual, couples and family counseling, support groups for men and women and peer support groups for children impacted by divorce. To get more information, call CWF at (908) 322-

Email info@viennaplano.com for more information

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jump relay team of Dave Styler and Tom Planer won the Group 2 state championship this past weekend at Princeton University against a field of 59 teams. Planer jumped 6 feet and Styler cleared 5 foot 8.

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15-yr Fixed 4.75 1.50 5% 5% 5.212

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FINDEX Refinance/Close **Open 7 Days** **Call For Quote**

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First Rate Mortgage **888-887-9106**

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15-yr Fixed 4.750 0.00 5% 5% 4.840

30-yr Jumbo 5.875 0.00 5% 5% 6.410

15-yr Jumbo 5.125 0.00 5% 5% 5.410

31 ARM 3.625 0.01 10% 5% 4.710

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See Website at www.888-887-9106

First Savings Bank **732-758-4400**

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15-yr Fixed 4.750 0.00 5% 5% 4.780

30-yr Jumbo 5.625 0.00 5% 5% 6.000

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Loan Search **888-591-3279**

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30-yr Jumbo 5.625 0.00 5% 5% 5.650

15-yr Jumbo 4.875 0.00 5% 5% 4.940

171 ARM Bio 4.625 0.00 10% 75 4.440

31 ARM Bio 4.875 0.00 10% 75 4.440

See Website at www.loanpros.com

Program **Rate** **pts** **%dn** **up** **APR**

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15-yr Jumbo 4.625 0.00 10% 45 5.000

31 ARM 3.250 0.00 5% 5% 5.130

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30-yr Jumbo 5.750 0.00 5% 5% 5.770

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31 ARM 3.750 0.00 10% 5% 3.890

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