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Your Neighborhood in Print Since 1882

PTO Sets School Election Forum for Wednesday

WOODBRIDGE - The Presidents' Council of the township's PTOs will host a school board candidate's forum at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 28 at Avenel Middle School.

The public is invited to attend the session to learn more about the six candidates competing for three 3-year seats on the township's Board of Education in the April 17 election.

Three of the candidates - incumbent Eileen Kaczmarek, Gregory Bedard and Stephen Conroy - are running together as a ticket that has been endorsed by the township's Democratic leaders.

Grehl, 48, of Fords, said, "We share the same vision. The best way to make a difference and

accomplish things is as a team."

Grehl described herself as "one of the few board members that has gone inside the schools to hundreds and hundreds of events."

Grehl founded Project Graduation at Woodbridge High School, and has been a community and school district volunteer for more than 20 years.

Huber, 54, of Port Reading, was appointed to the board in July 1999 to nine months of an unexpired term following an unsuccessful 1998 campaign.

An 18-year employee of the township's Public Works Department, Huber said, "I am strictly in it for the children."

Huber will advocate shared services, which allow the school district to join with the municipal

government to save money on purchasing and other expenses.

Garley, 47, of Iselin, is a Woodbridge police sergeant who heads the bias-crime unit and chairman of the township's Human Relations Commission.

A lifelong township resident and John F. Kennedy Memorial High School graduate, Garley said, "My 20 years in law enforcement would be an asset to the school board."

"My whole life, I have been dealing with young kids and trying to lead them in the right direction," said Garley, who has been a longtime volunteer working for the community's youth.

In addition to coaching various sports teams, Garley has worked to start a teen hot line for troubled

youth.

Kaczmarek, 49, is a 1969 graduate of Woodbridge High School who currently serves as board president.

Conroy, who is employed by the township sanitation department, has an unlisted home phone number and could not be reached for comment.

Bedard, 25, of Woodbridge proper, is a 1993 graduate of Woodbridge High School who attended Oxford University in England.

Bedard, a member of the Woodbridge Education Foundation, is employed in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at Rutgers University.

GOP Comments Vary on McGreevey

STATE - Woodbridge Mayor James McGreevey may have got an unlikely defender when he formally announced his gubernatorial campaign last week - Jersey City Mayor Bret Schundler.

Schundler, who is challenging acting Gov. Donald DiFrancesco in a June Republican primary, issued a statement following McGreevey's speech suggesting that the Democrat would put DiFrancesco on the defensive on issues like property taxes, state indebtedness, education and quality of life issues.

"After five years of running for governor, Jim McGreevey is offering New Jersey nothing new," said DiFrancesco campaign manager Charlie Smith. "Jim

McGreevey would be better served striving for credible and believable."

Schundler countered by saying "I am the only candidate in the Republican primary with fresh ideas about how we can give parents and children more choices in education, provide for honesty and real property and income-tax cuts, and make New Jersey a better place to live."

Meanwhile, as DiFrancesco continues remains mired in controversies regarding loans to him paid off by political allies, another potential timebomb threatens his candidacy: racial profiling.

Two years ago, DiFrancesco rose in defense of embattled Supreme Court nominee Peter G.

Verniero, puncturing attacks arrayed against him. Verniero, he said, was a man of "utter integrity."

But early last month, DiFrancesco distanced himself from the man he once championed. Verniero is the main character in a drama unfolding in Trenton as the Senate Judiciary Committee holds hearings examining how the state police and Attorney General's Office dealt with racial profiling.

There is considerable speculation about whether Verniero misled senators about what he knew about the problem and when he knew it. What is revealed at the hearings could harm DiFrancesco's political ambitions.

To many political observers, it comes as no surprise that DiFrancesco is keeping an arm's-length distance from Verniero, now an associate state Supreme Court justice. Schundler says he does not intend to hammer DiFrancesco this spring over racial profiling.

He denied that he was holding fire on the issue out of fear of alienating conservative Republican voters, who generally support the state police and represent the bulk of Republican primary voters.

While critical of DiFrancesco over the issue of racial profiling, Schundler said he prefers to debate him over property taxes, state debt, and education funding.

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YOUR COUNTY NEWS

Middlesex County Schools, MCFOODS And The MCIA Fight Hunger

MIDDLESEX COUNTY — Students at more than 100 county public and private schools are collecting canned goods and other non-perishable food for the Middlesex County Food Organization and Outreach Distribution Services (M.C.-F.O.O.D.S.) sixth annual spring food drive, which ends March 23.

All of the food collected will be brought to a new warehouse on Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick, leased by the Middlesex County Board of Freeholders and provided free for M.C.-F.O.O.D.S. use as a distribution center for food pantries and soup kitchens.

The food drive began on March 12. Students brought canned goods, soup, pasta, rice and basic supplies like diapers and baby wipes to their schools where plastic green collection containers have been placed.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn that we all have a responsibility to help our neighbors and give something back to our communities," said Freeholder Jane Z.

Brady, who has chaired the food drive for several years.

"We collected 28 tons of food last year. This year we expect an even better response, since 20 additional schools are involved," said Brady.

M.C.F.O.O.D.S. helps keep more than 40 food pantries and soup kitchens in Middlesex County supplied with canned goods and non-perishable food.

"The new facility on Jersey Avenue will make handling and distributing the food much easier," said Freeholder director David B. Crabiel, the Freeholder liaison to the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA).

"For seven years, they've been stuffing supplies into closets and small rooms at a county-owned facility in Roosevelt Park and storing them at the county recycling center on Edgeboro Road. This new space brings all M.C.F.O.O.D.S. services under one roof," said Crabiel.

Along with the special school efforts, M.C.F.O.O.D.S. conducts year-round food collection

programs and works with local corporations to sponsor annual food drives at their own facilities.

Residents may donate canned and non-perishable food items year-round at M.C.F.O.O.D.S. drop-off sites, which include the public libraries in Dunellen, Edison, Milltown, Monroe, North Brunswick, Plainsboro, South Brunswick and Woodbridge, and other county food pantries.

Residents may call M.C.-F.O.O.D.S. at (732) 729-0880 for more information or to determine the location of the nearest food pantry or drop-off site.

M.C.F.O.O.D.S. would also like to hear from local companies willing to sponsor annual two-week food drives at their facilities in Middlesex County. The organization's goal is to have at least one corporate food drive each month in order to sustain the local food pantries. Company officials should contact M.C.F.O.O.D.S. at (732) 729-0880 for more information.

The Heart Of Human Experience

MIDDLESEX COUNTY — The Storyteller's Cottage Series, a program of the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, present "The Heart of Human Experience" on March 18 at JFK Library located at 500 Hoes Lane, Piscataway at 2:30 p.m. Greek-American storyteller Barbara Aliparantis celebrates the immigrant experience, triumph over obstacles, traditional Greek folktales, and stories about the global family of human kind and other forms of life.

Aliparantis' program is designed to encourage people to celebrate all cultures through storytelling and representing an ethnographic kaleidoscope of folklore around the globe. "We are pleased to have Ms. Aliparantis a week before Greek Independence Day, a holiday that Greek people all over the world honor. Barbara believes storytelling is an everyday conversation, teaching tool, sur-

vival technique and an ancient art that must be preserved and the Commission agrees," says Anna M. Aschkenes, Executive Director of Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

The Storyteller's Cottage Series present culturally diverse storytelling to the community throughout the year. Storytelling sessions are without charge although registration is required. To register contact the Commission at (732) 745-4489. Those with hearing impairments may register by dialing (732) 745-3888 TTY, or 711 via the New Jersey Relay Service.

Funding for the Storyteller's Cottage Series is in part from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Colgate-Palmolive Global Technologies, and the Gannett Group/Home News Tribune.

Leaders Address Child Care Needs

MIDDLESEX COUNTY — A meeting of community leaders working to meet child care needs in Middlesex County will be held on Thursday, March 29 at the Woodbridge Hilton, 120 Wood Avenue South, Iselin, from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Chris Kjeldsen, Vice President for Community and Workplace Programs, Johnson & Johnson, and Chairman of the Board of New Brunswick Tomorrow, will address the group.

The group will consider action steps to follow up on the Middlesex County Work First New Jersey Child Care Plan,

which was submitted to the New Jersey Department of Human Services last year.

The top three child care service priorities identified: school readiness, parent options and accessibility will be discussed. To meet these needs, ways of improving the quality of child care, creating a seamless school-age care system, and cultivating child care as an economic development strategy will be explored.

For more information, contact Bridget S. Kennedy, Director of Social Work Services at (732) 745-4228.

*You're invited to attend an Open House at
Middlesex County Vocational and Technical High Schools*

OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, March 25, 2001

Program begins at 1:00 p.m. For more information, call the school nearest you.

Who should come?

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YOUR LOCAL NEWS

Harriet Marion Is Irish Person Of The Year

WOODBIDGE—Harriet D. Marion of Edison has been selected as Irish Person of the Year for the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade sponsored by the Woodbridge American-Irish Association.

Harriet was born in New Brunswick and lived there until she moved to Edison in 1951. She has been a member of St. Matthew the Apostle parish in Edison since it was founded in May of 1952.

Prior to her marriage to George Marion in 1957, she was employed by Johnson & Johnson as an Executive Secretary to the Executive Counselor and the Comptroller. She retired from Metropolitan Life Insurance

Company as a Branch Administrator.

She traces her Irish lineage to her great-grandmother who came from County Derry.

As a member of the Woodbridge American-Irish, she has served on the Board of Directors as Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary. She was in charge of the float for the parade for eight years and for many years was in charge of the raffles.

Her husband, George, died in January of 2000. She has four children, George Jr. of Canada; Frances Comiskey of Metuchen; Anne Marie St. Clair of Louisiana and Marybeth Marion of Edison and six grandchildren.

Morgan First Aid Squad Receives State Funds

SAYREVILLE—Assembly Deputy Minority Conference Leader John S. Wisniewski secured \$60,000 in state funds for Morgan Volunteer First Aid Squad in Sayreville. The money was part of a special funding that was inserted into the state budget last June. The squad used the money to purchase a new crash truck which cost \$163,000.

As an avid supporter of the fire departments and first aid squads in his district, and as a member of the Fire Safety Commission, Wisniewski understands the

importance of safety workers.

"It is my job to work hard to secure money for the people of the 19th District," said Wisniewski (D-Sayreville). "Volunteer services are important to the protection and safety of every persons life. I felt it was necessary that municipal services deserved its fair share of budgetary assistance."

Wisniewski also secured an equal amount for the Volunteer Fire Department of South Amboy. \$60,000 was secured for bunker parts and Scott Airpicks.

The Library Is The Place To Be

EDISON—Come visit the Children's Room of the Edison Public Libraries in April. The librarians have planned many exciting programs including:

Buzz Around the Library: A program for children 4-5 years of age. Registration will begin in person or by phone on March 26. Join us for some fun tales about bees and honey-making. The program will be at Clara Barton Branch, Wednesday, April 4 at 1:30 p.m.

Puppy Dog Tales: A program for children 2 and 3 years of age with their parent or caregiver. Registration will begin in person or by phone on April 2. The program includes stories, finger-plays, songs, crafts and films about famous puppies in children's literature. Program dates and times are: North Edison Branch, Thurs., April 19 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Main Library, Monday, April 23 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and Clara Barton Branch, Thurs., April 26 at 1:30 p.m.

Balloon Fun: A program for children 4-5 years of age. Registration will begin in person or by phone on April 3. Stories,

films and more will be presented on some different types of balloons. The program will be held at Clara Barton Branch, Wednesday, April 18 at 1:30 p.m.

Paws to Read with Wishbone Contest: April 2-7 at Edison Public Libraries. This contest is open to children preschool-grade 6. Come into the library and try to guess under which bone Wishbone, the dog, had buried his library book, before it becomes overdue. Correct answers will be placed in a random drawing for some very special prizes.

National Library Week Giveaway Events: To celebrate this special week, April 2-7, children can pick up the special "Doggie Bag" giveaways that will be available in the children's departments at all the Edison Public Library branches.

Locations of the Edison Public Libraries are: Main Library, 340 Plainfield Ave., (732) 287-2351, ext. 3.; North Edison Branch, 777 Grove Ave., (732) 548-4759, ext. 228 and Clara Barton Library, 141 Hoover Ave., (732) 738-0748.

ENGAGEMENT NEWS

Munsey - Cacchione

AVENEL—Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Cacchione of Avenel announce the engagement of Stacey Munsey of Avenel to their son, Anthony Francis Cacchione of Avenel.

The engagement was announced on June 10, 2000.

Stacey is a graduate of William Patterson College. She is employed by Overlook Hospital as a Registered Nurse.

Anthony attended Middlesex County College. He is employed by Robert Wood Johnson Hospital as an Emergency Medical Tech. Supervisor.

The couple plan to be married in October 2001.



"Secret" Speaker

CARTERET—The public is invited to Ready Readers Book Discussion Group on Wednesday, April 11 at 7 p.m., at Carteret Public Library, 100 Cooke Avenue. The title of the book to be discussed is "Secret Admirer." The author is Patricia MacDonald.

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**YOUR
AREA &
STATE NEWS**

**Kids Learn
Sensitivity
For Peers**

AREA—"Don't bully your classmates who wear eyeglasses!" That's the message that Dr. Robert Scharfman is bringing to area schoolchildren.

Dr. Scharfman, an Old Bridge ophthalmologist, wants to help youngsters understand that their friends and classmates who wear glasses should not be teased or bullied. "We hear a lot of news these days about teenagers who resort to violence, especially in schools, after being taunted or picked on for extended periods of time. My goal is to help teach these

"We hear a lot of news these days about teenagers who resort to violence, especially in schools, after being taunted or picked on..."

five and six-year-olds to be more tolerant of their classmates who may look different than they do; whether it's wearing glasses for the first time or being of a different race or background. I think it's important to reach out to the kids at an early age."

According to Dr. Scharfman, Marc Brown's children's book, "Arthur's Eyes" tells the story of a group of friends who learn to help one of their peers to socially adjust to wearing new glasses. "Many people who started wearing glasses at young ages vividly recall feeling shy or embarrassed about having to wear glasses, especially to school the first few weeks. Some people were victims of social teasing and jokes, which makes the experience that much more difficult to handle."

Visit www.njlasikmd.com to learn more about Dr. Scharfman and his practice.

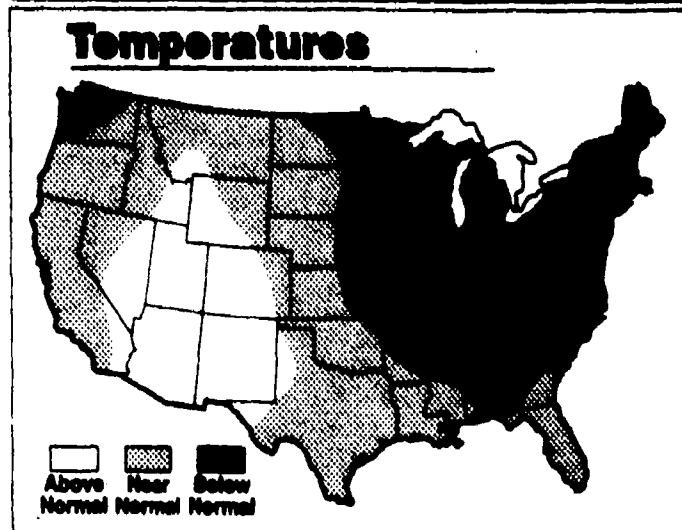
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LOCAL 7-DAY FORECAST

Thursday	Thu. night	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
							
Cloudy and windy.	Cloudy.	Some sun, cold and windy.	Variable cloudiness.	Snow changing to rain.	Some sun and cold.	Cloudy with snow and rain.	Very windy and cold.
52	36	45/30	44/29	41/24	43/32	47/39	44/26

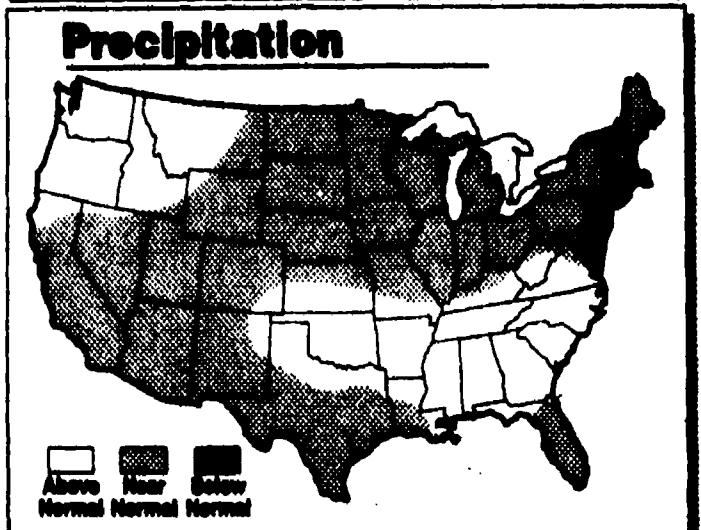
THE WEEK AHEAD...



NATIONAL SUMMARY

Cool weather will cover the eastern half of the nation. Temperatures are expected to average 5 to 10 degrees below normal across the Southeast, Middle Atlantic and Midwest. A storm system will spread rain and mountain snow across the Pacific Northwest. Storms will bring precipitation to the Southeast and southern Plains. Warm weather will cover the Southwest and Great Basin.

THE WEEK AHEAD...



U.S. TRAVELER'S CITIES

City	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Atlanta	Hi Lo W	Hi Lo W	Hi Lo W	Hi Lo W
Boston	44 34 r	41 32 sh	42 32 c	45 26 pc
Chicago	42 28 pc	38 24 pc	42 31 pc	48 33 pc
Cleveland	44 28 c	36 26 pc	42 28 pc	44 22 s
Denver	62 34 pc	60 30 pc	58 30 pc	58 32 pc
Des Moines	50 26 s	42 24 s	46 30 s	47 38 c
Detroit	42 30 c	37 28 pc	44 28 c	45 24 pc
Houston	76 58 pc	72 48 c	69 49 c	72 56 c
Indianapolis	49 30 pc	45 33 pc	45 33 pc	48 32 pc
Kansas City	56 32 pc	52 29 s	52 36 s	50 42 c
Los Angeles	74 49 pc	76 51 pc	70 48 pc	73 50 pc
Miami	76 60 s	79 61 s	79 62 pc	77 54 s
Minn.- St. Paul	38 18 sl	38 20 pc	40 26 c	38 18 pc
New Orleans	74 56 pc	71 51 c	68 50 s	71 51 s
New York City	42 34 c	42 34 pc	42 36 c	47 27 pc
Omaha	52 28 pc	46 22 s	48 30 s	47 39 c
Phoenix	90 60 s	90 62 s	88 60 s	88 58 s
San Francisco	65 50 pc	64 51 c	64 49 pc	63 53 pc
Seattle	60 40 pc	58 42 c	53 43 sh	55 45 sh
Washington	44 34 r	44 34 pc	48 36 pc	55 29 s

SUN & MOON

Sunrise	Sunset
Thu. 5:57 a.m.	6:11 p.m.
Fri. 5:56 a.m.	6:12 p.m.
Moonrise	Moonsset
Thu. 5:11 a.m.	3:56 p.m.
Fri. 5:40 a.m.	4:56 p.m.
Moon Phases	
New	First
Mar 24	Apr 1
Full	Last
Apr 7	Apr 7
Weather (W):	
s-sunny, pe-partly cloudy,	
c-cloudy, sh-showers,	
t-thunderstorms, r-rain,	
af-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.	

WORLD TRAVELER'S CITIES

City	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Amsterdam	Hi Lo W	Hi Lo W	Hi Lo W	Hi Lo W
Berlin	53 46 c	47 37 sh	45 30 c	38 27 pc
Buenos Aires	49 33 c	35 28 sn	40 31 c	37 27 sn
Cairo	75 66 c	79 63 c	79 60 pc	70 56 c
Jerusalem	86 55 s	83 58 s	86 60 s	88 63 s
Johannesburg	68 45 s	66 45 s	69 48 pc	74 51 s
London	79 62 pc	74 62 pc	76 64 c	80 57 pc
Madrid	58 51 r	58 45 c	50 36 c	43 35 c
Mexico City	74 47 pc	70 47 pc	59 41 c	59 45 c
Moscow	74 47 s	72 50 pc	65 48 sh	68 46 c
Paris	29 23 sn	31 26 sn	27 15 sn	28 17 c
Rio de Janeiro	56 49 sh	56 50 c	52 37 r	45 40 c
Rome	82 70 s	83 71 pc	84 71 pc	82 70 pc
San Juan	75 57 pc	77 59 pc	75 49 pc	63 45 c
Seoul	85 74 pc	84 74 pc	86 73 pc	83 73 pc
Sydney	61 40 pc	60 48 s	62 43 pc	64 46 s
Tokyo	80 62 pc	77 67 s	80 72 c	79 70 c
Toronto	59 50 s	64 55 pc	62 57 c	67 56 c
Winnipeg	36 30 sn	31 28 sn	32 22 c	36 17 c
Zurich	15 2 c	17 -1 pc	25 9 pc	22 15 sn

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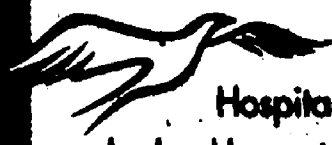
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YOUR AREA & STATE NEWS**New Jersey's January Unemployment Rate Fell To 3.6 Percent**

STATE—New Jersey's economy showed remarkable strength over the year 2000 and it continued the trend in 2001 as the unemployment rate fell to 3.6 percent in January. The January rate was down 0.2 percentage point from the revised December rate of 3.8 percent and matched the 3.6 percent rates for March 2000 and February 1989 as the lowest monthly rate since March 1970 when the rate was 3.3 percent.

For the thirteenth consecutive month the State's jobless rate was below the national rate which was 4.2 percent in January. Analysts also noted that for the first time since 1991 New Jersey's 3.8 percent annual average rate for 2000 was lower than the U.S. annual unemployment rate, which was 4.0 percent.

According to preliminary results from the Labor Department's monthly survey of employers, the number of persons working in New Jersey declined slightly, by 900 from December to a seasonally ad-

justed employment level of 4,030,200 in January. This followed a strong job gain in December which was revised upward to 9,100 jobs.

"It is terrific that our unemployment rate fell to 3.6 percent last month and the revised numbers for last year.

Also based on the newly benchmarked employment series, nonfarm payroll employment in the Garden State has grown by 520,500 jobs in the seven years since January 1994.

The latest monthly survey of employers found that, on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment rose by 1,300 from December to a level of 160,400 in January, its highest level since November 1989, when it reached 162,200. Employment among special trade and general building contractors was up by 1,100 and 600, respectively, but jobs in heavy construction slipped by 400.

Total trade employment advanced by 600 in January due to gains in wholesale trade that

were split equally among distributors of durable and nondurable goods.

Jobholding in finance/insurance/real estate edged up by 300 over the month. The increase resulted from scattered gains throughout the finance segment.

After adjusting for seasonality, manufacturing employment was relatively unchanged, inching up by 100 from December to a level of 458,800 in January. Nondurable goods rose by 200 as gains in foods and textiles of 400 and 300, respectively, combined with several smaller increases to more than offset drops of 400 in printing and publishing, 300 in paper products and 300 in leather goods. Durable goods employment decreased slightly by 100 from December.

Compared with a year ago, production workers' hourly earnings have increased by 25 cents or 1.6 percent, while weekly earnings have grown by \$7.28.

GPU Energy Encourages Responsible Dog Ownership

STATE—To insure that visitors to customers' homes by meter readers are safe and productive, GPU Energy asks that customers consider keeping dogs secured in an area away from the path to the meter.

"As spring approaches, we know that many GPU Energy customers who own dogs allow their pets to stay outside more often," said Berni Smith, corporate safety manager. "As a safety precaution, we hope to raise awareness about potential injuries that can occur from encounters with dogs that owners often consider 'friendly' but cause injury to our meter readers."

As part of the safety program at GPU Energy, employees are required to report any attack to local authorities. There are approximately 25 dog bites to GPU Energy meter readers per year.

If a customer's dog exhibits aggressive behavior toward strangers, GPU Energy asks that owners inform our customer service center by calling 1-800-545-7741 so we can update our meter-

reading records.

Customers can refer to their most recent bill to have a good idea of when to expect a meter reader in their neighborhood.

GPU, Inc. (NYSE:GPU), headquartered in Morristown, is a registered public utility holding company providing utility and utility-related services to customers throughout the world. GPU serves 4.6 million customers directly through its electric companies—GPU Energy in the US, Midlands Electricity plc in the UK, and Emderisa in Argentina. It serves another 1.4 million customers indirectly through its gas transmission subsidiary, GasNet, in Australia. The company's independent power project business units own interests in and operate 22 projects in 7 countries and the US. GPU's 1999 revenues were \$4.8 billion and its total assets were \$21.7 billion. GPU's other subsidiaries include GPU Advanced Resources, Inc., GPU International, Inc., GPU Nuclear, Inc., GPU Service, Inc., and GPU Telecom Services, Inc. (<http://www.gpu.com>)

New Jersey Residents Could Lose \$170 Million

STATE—MassMutual management has launched a multi-million dollar proxy campaign against policy owners to quash a movement to convert the company from a mutual to a stockholder form of ownership and distribute more than \$4 billion. The company proxy also empowers MassMutual management to change the By-laws to make it vastly more difficult for policy owners of MassMutual and Connecticut Mutual, which merged in 1996, to vote their interests and get their voices heard.

New Jersey residents stand to lose \$170 million if MassMutual management slips their proxy by

unaware policy owners. In 2000, New Jersey was the sixth largest state of business for MassMutual with over 80,000 policy owners.

John H. Jameison, executive director of the MassMutual Owners Association (MMOA), a nationwide organization of concerned policy owners declared, "The battle between policy owners and MassMutual management is like David fighting Goliath. Management is spending millions of the policy owners' own money to solicit votes, so they can stop policy owners from getting their rightful share of the surplus money the company is holding for them."

To prevent the loss of their

valuable rights, MMOA is urging policy owners to immediately complete a Proxy on behalf of Policy Owners.

This proxy is available by phone at (724) 586-1156; Fax at (561) 747-6708; E-mail at: massmutualowners@yahoo.com; or at the following Internet site: <http://www.massmutualowner-sassociation.com>.

The artfully crafted company proxy requires policy owners to either vote against their own best interests—or not vote at all. "The whole thing is a farce. Some of our members think it is just a scheme by management to silence policy owners," Jameison stated.

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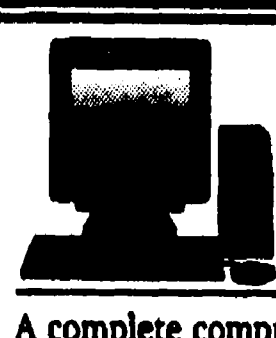
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Free Tax Preparation For Taxpayers With Special Needs

STATE — Free tax help is as near as a community center or local library for thousands of New Jersey taxpayers this year, the Internal Revenue Service announced. The agency has trained more than 1,600 volunteers who are now on-site at over 500 locations statewide.

The IRS sponsors two volunteer programs — Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE). The goal for both is to provide free help to

individuals who need, but cannot obtain, professional tax assistance, according to agency spokesperson Gregg Semanick. Last year alone, more than 78,000 New Jersey taxpayers received help at a VITA or TCE site.

"With these programs, we reach out to people with lower incomes, the elderly, people whose English isn't fluent, and of course, the physically challenged," Semanick said.

"Our volunteers are the heart

of the program," he continued. "Many have been helping for years. They enjoy the challenges of tax preparation and they're dedicated to helping in their communities."

IRS volunteers are trained and tested in basic income tax return preparation, including special tax credits for individuals with children. Volunteers can prepare both federal and state tax returns. Most volunteer sites offer help based on need, not income. Taxpayers can call the

IRS toll-free assistance number at 1-800-829-1040 for locations convenient to them.

VITA and TCE are two of many IRS services available to make filing easier. Throughout the filing season, taxpayers can receive help 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. Several other toll-free services are available day or night, such as automated refund information and TeleTax's recorded information on common tax topics at 1-800-

829-4477 or requesting copies of forms and publications at 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).

Tax assistance in Spanish is also available by calling 1-800-829-1040. This service is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday throughout the filing season.

"We believe that making taxes easier starts with offering the help people want — where and when they want it," stated Semanick.

How To Report Property Tax Rebates

STATE — To help New Jersey taxpayers understand and meet their tax responsibilities, the Internal Revenue Service recently explained the reporting requirements for the New Jersey Saver Rebate Program.

"Last year, homeowners in New Jersey received a rebate averaging \$240 of their 1999 property taxes," explained Gregg Semanick, IRS spokesperson. "For taxpayers that claimed itemized deductions, including property taxes, on last year's federal

income tax return, it will be necessary to report the rebate as income for 2000. Residents will not receive a Form 1099 from the State of New Jersey since this is not an income tax refund."

"Rebates of this type are called 'recoveries,'" Semanick said. "A recovery is a return of an amount you deducted or took credit for in an earlier year. In this case, it is the deduction you took for your property taxes in 1999. Taxpayers who itemized last year enjoyed the benefit of

taking a deduction for the entire amount of their property tax payment. However, since they received part of that deduction back in the form of a property tax rebate, after they filed their return, these taxpayers will have to report that rebate as income on this year's return."

New Jersey taxpayers should report the rebate on Line 21 of Form 1040. Line 21 is designated for reporting "Other Income" and has a space for describing the income. Taxpayers should enter

"Property Tax Rebate" in the space provided on the return.

Taxpayers who used the standard deduction, or who did not claim their property tax as an itemized deduction in 1999, do not have to report the rebate as income. By not claiming an itemized deduction for property taxes, these taxpayers did not receive a special tax benefit and therefore there is no taxable recovery.

The IRS suggests that taxpayers review the explanation of "Other Income" on page 25 of

the Form 1040 Instruction Booklet. Taxpayers can find a more detailed explanation of recoveries on pages 16-21 of IRS Publication 525.

Taxpayers are also encouraged to discuss their specific tax situation with the tax professional that prepares their return.

Tax Assistance is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week, on the IRS toll-free telephone line at 1-800-829-1040 or on the IRS Internet site at www.irs.gov.

Your 1099 Is In The Mail...

AREA — If you are a Social Security beneficiary, you can look forward to getting your Social Security Benefit Statement for Tax Year 2000 (SSA-1099) soon. Social Security has recently finished mailing out more than 48 million.

Some people who get Social Security have to pay taxes on their benefits. Form SSA-1099 shows the total amount of benefits you received in the previous year. You use it when you complete your federal income tax return to find out if any of your benefits are subject to tax.

If you lose or don't receive your SSA-1099, you can request a replacement online from Social Security's website, at <https://s3abaca.ssa.gov/pro/1099/1099home.shtml>. You will need your name as it appears on benefit checks and/or letters and your Social Security number. You may also need your date and place

of birth and your mother's maiden name (to help identify you).

If you request a replacement on behalf of a deceased beneficiary, you will need the beneficiary's name and his or her Social Security number. (You may only request on behalf of a deceased beneficiary if you have received benefits on the same record.)

For more information on taxation of Social Security benefits, call the Internal Revenue Service's toll-free number, 1-800-829-3676, to ask for Publication 554, Tax Information for Older Americans.

A Wrong Number Can Delay Your Tax Return

AREA — As regular as clockwork, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reminds us to pay our taxes by sending us a Form 1040 soon after the first of the year. If you're due a refund, you also want to make sure you receive it promptly. You can avoid delays by verifying that all names and Social Security numbers are recorded correctly on your tax return.

When processing tax returns, IRS checks all names and Social Security numbers for accuracy. In the past, IRS matched the names and numbers of taxpayers and their spouses. Now, the names and numbers of all dependents, including newborns, listed on the

tax return are checked.

When IRS discovers an incorrect Social Security number on your tax return, they will send you a letter explaining the discrepancy. You must fix the problem by giving IRS the correct Social Security number before you can get a tax refund. If you don't already have a number of if

you need one for a dependent, call or visit a Social Security office.

In addition, check the Social Security number and name on your W-2 statement and pay stubs to make sure it matches the one on your Social Security card. If it doesn't, tell your employer immediately.

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YOUR LOCAL NEWS

Students Pay Tribute With Acts Of Kindness

WOODBIDGE—Woodbridge Middle School has been named a "Do Something National Champion School" for its outstanding participation in the fourth annual Do Something Kindness & Justice Challenge, a national education initiative in which students in grades K-12 perform acts of kindness and justice for two weeks following the Martin Luther King Jr. National Holiday. In January, Woodbridge Middle School students honored the life and legacy of Dr. King by performing 527 positive acts to improve their school and community.

Each day during the two-week initiative, students learned the values taught by Dr. King—responsibility, compassion, honesty, nonviolence, and moral

courage—and put these values into practice through their community-building actions. Students at Woodbridge Middle School joined more than 4 million students nationwide in participating in the program, and is one of only 700 schools to receive recognition as a "Do Something National Champion School."

"Our students are truly keeping Dr. King's dream alive," said Karen Neary, project coordinator. "They are realizing their power to make a difference."

Among the ways the students made a difference included shoveling snow for neighbors, collecting over 200 cans of soup for the soup kitchen and volunteering at various hospitals and senior residences.

"Young people are living the ideals to which my father devoted his life," said Martin Luther King III, Chair of the Do Something Kindness & Justice Challenge. "If young people can commit to a day of kindness and justice, they can commit to a week of kindness and justice—a week becomes a year, a year a lifetime."

The Kindness & Justice Challenge is sponsored by the youth leadership organization Do Something and global technology leader Applied Materials.

For more information about Do Something, call (212) 523-1175 or visit Do Something's website at www.dosomething.org.

Church Features Renowned Barbershop Choir

PERTH AMBOY—How do you celebrate 183 years of Methodism in Perth Amboy? By singing, of course!

The Simpson United Methodist Church, High Street in Perth Amboy, will feature the Central Jersey Ecumenical Barbershop Choir at its annual Anniversary Sunday celebration, March 25.

Founded several years ago, the Ecumenical Barbershop Choir usually provides religious music in the central Jersey area through the summer months, a time when most regular choirs take a hiatus. All choir members are active in the Society for the Preservation

and Encouragement of Barbershop and Quartet Singing in America.

The group has consented to perform at the second oldest church in the city because of a request by Simpson parishioner Elizabeth Hurley.

Under the direction of John T. Huetz, himself a barber-shopper with extensive musical experience, the group uses the barbershop approach as a vehicle to spiritually uplift audiences.

The choir will augment the special service, which will also feature the preaching of former Simpsonian Rev. George Munn.

Rev. Joel Fernandez will offer a special sermon entitled, "A Blind Man As A Witnessing Guide." In addition, the church's own famed Sanctuary Choir will participate in the event.

A luncheon is planned after the service with a special interactive program designed to commemorate the church's founding.

The celebration is open to the public and all past and current parishioners are invited to attend.

For more information, contact Pastor Joel Fernandez, (732) 826-1992.

Amnesty For Overdue Books

EDISON—At the Edison Township Public Library throughout National Library Week, April 1-7. During that time period, patrons may return any overdue materials without paying fines.

Ropelouski Receives Scholarship

SOUTH AMBOY—Adam T. Ropelouski has been selected to receive an Army ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) scholarship for four years at the University of Scranton, Pa.

ROTC cadets are selected for the merit-based scholarship program on basis of their academic record which includes comprehensive test results, school officials' evaluations, scholastic achievement, and accomplishments in extra-curricular, leadership and athletic activities.

The scholarship covers a predetermined amount of tuition and comprehensive fees, as well as a flat rate annual amount for textbooks, supplies and equipment, and some tax-free spending money.

Upon graduation from college and completion of the ROTC program, the cadet will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, National Guard, or Reserve.

Ropelouski is the son of Alyson K. Ropelouski of South Amboy and Thomas Ropelouski of Parlin.

Resident Named To Dean's List

EDISON — Gaurav G. Kamani, a resident of Edison, has recently been named to the dean's list at Boston University for the fall semester.

Boston University is the fourth largest independent university in the United States, with an enrollment of nearly 30,000 students in its 15 schools and colleges. The University offers an exceptional grounding in the liberal arts, a broad range of programs in the arts, engineering, science and professional areas, and state-of-the-art facilities for teaching and research. Located in the heart of a city rich in cultural and intellectual attractions, the University is one of the nation's preeminent institutions of higher learning.

Fourth Annual Seder Meal

PERTH AMBOY—Come and join us as we experience a Seder, the Jewish ceremonial meal on the first night of Passover. It is at this meal that Jesus instituted the Eucharist on the night before he died. There are four sections to the meal. The third section, which is the main course, will include roasted lamb and root vegetables (potatoes and carrots). This is a great way to begin Holy Week.

The Seder Meal will be on Sunday, April 8 from 5-7:30 p.m.

Reservations are required. A donation of \$15 per person is requested. Children under 12, \$10.

Call Emmaus House at (732) 442-7688 by April 3 to make your reservation.

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Top Ten Tips For A Good Quick Car Rental

AREA—Is there a charge to drop your rental car off in a different location from where you picked it up? Is there an early drop-off charge? These queries and eight others make up AAA's top ten questions to ask when renting a car.

"Asking the right questions before you rent the car can be the difference between a fun vacation and one you'd rather forget," said Melissa O'Neill Walczak, Manager, AAA Central-West Jersey.

These questions are not ranked in order of importance and are not intended to be an all-inclusive list.

- * Before making the reservation, ask your insurance agent if your personal insurance policy covers collision and liability for rental cars. Ask if it has limitation or deductibles that apply. Also, check with your credit card company—some cards provide free coverage if you charge the car rental transaction.

- * As the car rental company if you are entitled to membership or employee discounts or benefits. For example, AAA members can receive up to a 20

percent discount with Hertz, in addition to other benefits such as special upgrades, coupons and exemptions from certain charges. To get the best rates available, call at least two to three weeks in advance.

- * Most car rental companies require renters to be at least 25 years old and present a valid driver's license at time of rental so ask if there is a minimum age.

- * Ask about the cancellation policy and what the charges would be if you returned the car earlier than the time of the reservation. Some companies charge for no-shows and early drop-offs. Ask when the car must be returned and whether you will be charged for a partial or full day if it is late. If it's a location that is not open 24 hours a day, know the hours of operation and procedure for after-hours drop-off. Also ask whether there is a charge if you want to return the car to a different location.

- * Ask the agent for your reservation confirmation number. Write it down and have it handy when you pick up the car.

- * Upon pick up, ask whether the rental car has driver or dual

air bags. Air bags are designed to work in conjunction with seat belts. Every passenger should be properly belted and children 12 and under should ride in the back seat, properly restrained.

- * If necessary, reserve a child safety seat at the time of initial reservation and then reconfirm several days before you leave, as availability may be limited. If you do not have a child safety seat, the car rental agency may refuse to rent a car to you. Rear-facing infant seats should always go in the back seat of the vehicle.

- * Inquire about refueling choices. Most car rental firms offer several options, however, AAA recommends refilling before returning the car to avoid the up-front fuel purchase or the normally expensive refueling charge.

- * Ask if your driving record may be checked. Most major car rental companies are checking motor vehicle records on renters and additional drivers in certain states. Because the screening is done at the time of pick up — not when the reservation is made — drivers should be aware that they could be denied service

based on the findings. AAA members can verify their driving records prior to rental by calling TravelCheck at 1-800-388-9099. AAA members pay \$7.95, plus sales tax—a \$2 savings over the standard fee.

- * Before leaving the rental car lot, walk around the car to check for damages. If there are damages, note them on the rental agreement and notify an employee of the car's condition.

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Trouble-Free Automotive Travel Guide

AREA— "The AAA Guide to Trouble-Free Travel"—a self-help brochure on traveler safety—has been revised and re-issued to help vacationers improve their odds of having a safe trip if they adopt common-sense behaviors, according to the AAA New Jersey Automobile Club in Florham Park.

"While few travelers are confronted by safety problems on a trip, those who prepare wisely can help ensure a worry-free and enjoyable vacation," said Bob Housley, the Club's vice president of travel services.

Housley cited two key factors in successful trip planning. "First, make sure your vehicle is in top operating condition, and second, thoroughly plan your route in advance," he said.

As part of AAA's ongoing effort to improve traveler safety, the free six-page brochure provides tips ranging from safe driving to hotel safety.

- * If you travel by car, keep your gas tank full, doors locked,

windows up, safety belts buckled and children in properly installed safety seats.

- * Pack a flashlight, first-aid kit and travel-size fire extinguisher for use on the road and in your hotel room.

- * Carry a cell phone with you at all times.

- * Don't stop to help someone with car trouble. Instead, go to a pay phone or use your cell phone to call the police.

- * At night, park in a well lit, highly visible area.

- * When in your hotel, keep your entry and balcony doors locked, using deadbolts and chains whenever possible.

- * Whenever you go out, tell others in your party where you will be and when you will be back.

"If your vehicle breaks down and you can't get it off the roadway, get everyone out of the vehicle and stand on the shoulder safely away from traffic," AAA's Housley advises. "If you can get your vehicle off the

roadway, move it to the shoulder and away from the guardrails.

"If your vehicle is safely off the road, stay inside it until help—a police officer or emergency road service—arrives," he said. "If a stranger stops to offer help, roll down your window only far enough to ask him or her to call the police."

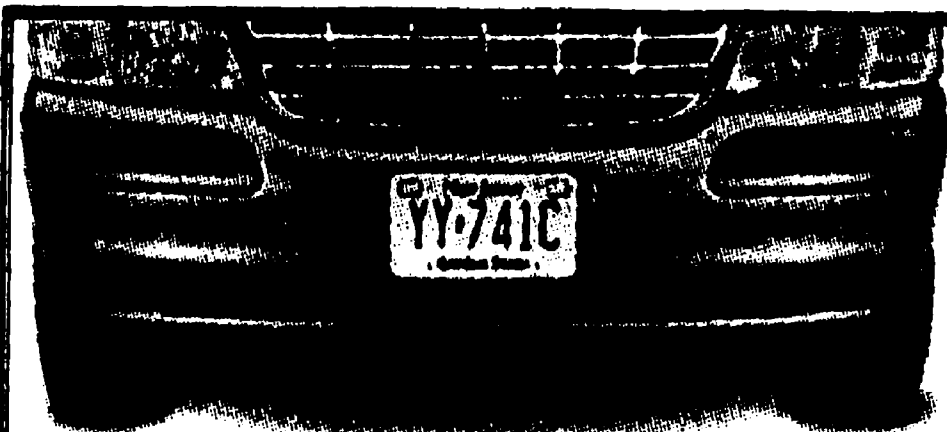
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Doing Their Part

Dear Editor,

Do we take our schools for granted? We drive on Inman Avenue, in Colonia, and pass a sign that reads "Oak Ridge Heights School 21." Well, George Vassiliades, president of Senior Citizen's Club of Colonia, sees that sign and asks himself, "What can we do to help them?"

After having two successful meetings with principal Mr. Joseph D'Orsi we decided that the Colonia Seniors can help by participating in the Mystery Reader Program. This would require us to read to the children in the classroom for 20-30 minutes once a month.

On Friday, March 9 at 10 a.m., Joseph D'Orsi (principal), Elaine Giardina (librarian) and her son, Mike, along with Philis M. Rebetje (Mystery Reader Coordinator) and George Vassiliades (president of Colonia Senior Citizens) with fifteen Colonia Senior volunteers were present. The school was officially closed for the day, which gave us the

A Better Representative

Dear Editor,

Perhaps Dan Reiman should be asked to explain his comment in your article that the people who were put on the Redevelopment Agency in Carteret were chosen to serve by the people. What people is he speaking about? When Mayor James Failace gave the council his nominations for the Redevelopment Agency, various members of the Carteret Community Action Council (CCAC) voiced their opinion and support for Pastor Amos Dickerson. In rejecting that nomination, the council also rejected our choice. The Mayor then gave the council another opportunity to accept Pastor Dickerson's nomination at a recent council meeting and again his nomination was rejected and the council did not listen to us.

We do not object to Mr. Onafowara being appointed to the Agency, but we believe that Pastor Dickerson would be a much better representative for our community. He has been extremely active since his arrival in Carteret and has been a strong leader and advocate for progress. Conversely, other than his status as a Carteret resident, Mr. Onafowara has simply not been involved in the community. Incidentally, Mr. Reiman conveniently failed to mention that one of the council's other choices

opportunity to hold our meeting, lay the foundation and launch the program.

The Mystery Reader Program was started January of 2000 by Philis M. Rebetje, with the help of Mr. D'Orsi. We hope that our involvement will strengthen the program and continue to succeed. Our two and half hour meeting was most enjoyable and constructive. Plans were also being considered for expanding our involvement in other areas (checkers).

What a pleasure to see Mr. D'Orsi and his staff so dedicated to the children. The next time you see the sign that reads "Oak Ridge Heights School 21," remember Mr. D'Orsi and his staff and the Senior Citizen's Club of Colonia. We are doing our part to make our community a better place to live.

George Vassiliades
President,
Senior Citizen's Club,
Colonia

for the Redevelopment Agency, Talisa Andrews, is a resident of Woodbridge.

I would also like to clarify that Mayor Failace has never stated that the council's choices were not "good people" at any meeting. I attend council meetings regularly and heard no such words. I'm sure that the Mayor has only the best interest of the borough in mind but having seen the council reject our clear choice to serve as a representative on the Redevelopment Agency, I must question whether the council cares about the citizens at all.

Lastly, we would like to clarify that the CCAC is not a political organization. It is an organization which is open to all residents of Carteret. I don't understand how Mr. Reiman can say anything about an organization's purpose when he has never attended a meeting or asked any of our members about the organization. The fact that we are encouraging voter registration drives does not in and of itself make us political. Rather, our organization has chosen to ensure that every Carteret resident learn about the wonders of Democracy of which Mr. Reiman spoke in your article. Voting is after all, a wonderful right to which we are all entitled.

Mary D. Fontaine,
Chairwoman-CCAC



The Board of Public Utilities delivered a one-two punch of bad news for New Jersey families last week when it authorized further rate hikes for natural gas at precisely the same time the state's annual winter utility bill amnesty program expired for the year.

This turn of events calls into question whether the Board has any appreciation for the hardships that senior citizens and other low-income families are encountering with their electricity and heating bills this year.

I take particular exception to the BPU's callousness in failing to speed creation of a fund that could help subsidize people who cannot afford to pay their utility bills in full. The state's 1999 energy deregulation law requires the BPU to study the creation of a so-called "universal service fund." According to published reports, a BPU spokesperson says the agency is moving forward with such a fund. But this is hardly reassuring, because there is no indication of when this work might finally be completed.

The need for a universal service fund was underscored on Thursday when the state's annual winter utility bill

amnesty program ended, an action that left thousands of residents wondering if their electric or gas power will be cut off in the weeks ahead. It's unconscionable that the BPU could let this valuable program expire without having the universal service fund in place.

The Board's cavalier approach to the universal service fund issue is eerily reminiscent of how it procrastinated in examining ways to finance environmentally friendly technologies like solar and wind power and projects as a means of conserving energy resources. (I'm gratified that the BPU finally completed that alternative energy initiative last month—a full year after its original deadline).

From my vantage point, the Board appears to lack a compass and a watch when mapping out policy decisions that affect New Jersey families. When the issues are alternative energy or a universal service fund, time—and the public's need—hardly seems to matter. But when the issue at hand is the profit line of power companies, people had better get out of the way as the BPU suddenly lurches into hyperdrive.

That's certainly what happened last week when the BPU gave utilities permission to hit customers with higher rates and

pass-along charges. Not only are utilities allowed to raise their gas rates 2 percent a month through July, they can pass on more than \$200 million in unrecovered costs to consumers along with 5.5 percent in interest charges.

Clearly, some aggressive priority therapy is in order at the BPU. With that in mind, I am requesting that the Winter Amnesty Program be extended until the BPU completes its work in creating a universal service fund. The BPU needs to act on this very important facet of deregulation. The legislation was intended to lower prices and help all New Jerseyans. But the legislation's potential cannot be realized without proper implementation of the consumer protections included in the law.

Such an undertaking will help senior citizens and other needy residents at a time when they are facing the grim prospects of ever-higher utility bills. Moreover, such consumer-minded action would go a long way toward restoring public confidence in a state agency that too often appears to be a willing lapdog for the utility interests.

Sniglets

LINT FOR THE BRAIN BY HENRY DAMEN

Making A Mockery Of "Zero Tolerance"

Recently the electronic publication FrontPageMagazine (<http://www.frontpagemag.com>) contained a piece by Scott Rubush examining what might be called the side effects of "zero tolerance" policies that relate to schools and firearms. The story was prompted by an incident at a Pacoima, Calif. elementary school, where a nine-year-old named Vincent was threatened with suspension when a substitute teacher found some snapshots in the boy's bookbag. The photos were of Vincent and his brother, shooting at a range while under the supervision of their aunt, a certified police CHIP firearms instructor for 20 years.

Vincent's family says a school official told the boy's mother that he had "extremely

disturbing and offensive photographs." The official threatened to call the police to interrogate the boy and said he would face expulsion. District officials decided not to expel Vincent, but the fourth-grader remains frightened by the way school officials behave towards him.

Vincent's aunt, Reynalda Bodar, said that safety concerns and respect for the proper usage of a firearm is what motivated her. "It prevents accidents from happening," Bodar said of firearms instruction. Bodar said her nephew had already developed a negative image of guns and she suggests the public schools are to blame. She also pointed out an obvious fact, "It's not the weapon, it's the person behind it, whether it be gun, knife, bat, fist or feet."

Vincent's family is not the only one in America wondering if things are getting a little goofy in the name of "zero tolerance."

1. Four New Jersey kindergarten students being suspended for playing cops-and-robbers.
 2. A Wisconsin third-grader suspended for having a key chain with a small replica of a gun.
 3. An 11-year-old Georgia girl suspended for having a key chain attached to a wallet depicting the Tweety Bird cartoon character was too long, and might possibly be used to garrot someone.
- Watch out, ladies and gentlemen, your child may have a gun-shaped birthmark. Then it's off to the gallows!

Planning Board Considers \$600M Project

PERTH AMBOY—The first part of the four-phase, \$600 million 'Landings at Harborside' project was presented to the Perth Amboy Planning Board last week.

Representatives from Kushner Companies, the developer, detailed the plan, along with project architects from Lindemon, Winckelmann, Deupree, Martin & Associates, landscape architects from EDAW and engineers from Schoor DePalma.

The first phase, which will concentrate on approximately 10.5 of the project's 49 total acres, will lead the way in transforming Perth Amboy's eastern shoreline.

A 30-foot wide, landscaped esplanade will line the waterfront throughout the length of the project, providing continuity and easy access to the planned retail space.

Phase I will consist of approximately 27,500 square feet of retail space, as well as a founders park at the heart of the project.

Two separate retail locations, featuring approximately 2,500 sq. ft. of space, will be located along the waterfront.

The first phase will also consist of 57 town homes, which will line the water at the site of the former Naval Reserve Center, as well as along Washington, Broad and Commerce Streets, creating a low-density, pedestrian-friendly edge to the water.

They will be complimented by 341 units of mid-rise condominiums that will feature landscaped roof-top terraces with trellises and outdoor patios.

The remaining 22,000 sq. ft. of retail space in the first phase will be contained in a mixed-use building to be located at the block bordered by Washington Street, High Street and the Arthur Kill.

This block will feature retail stores lining High Street with attached condominiums.

Architects have focused on aesthetics by creating parking venues that are hidden from the view of the general public.

This block will feature a parking deck located within the parameters of the building and surrounded along the outer parameters by the retail space and condominiums.

Other blocks will either utilize the same method or feature parking decks that remain mostly below grade with landscaped

rooftops. The first phase will also feature 350 to 400 on the street parking spaces. For the most part, the entire project is expected to preserve the existing street patterns, with Rector Street serving as the main service spine.

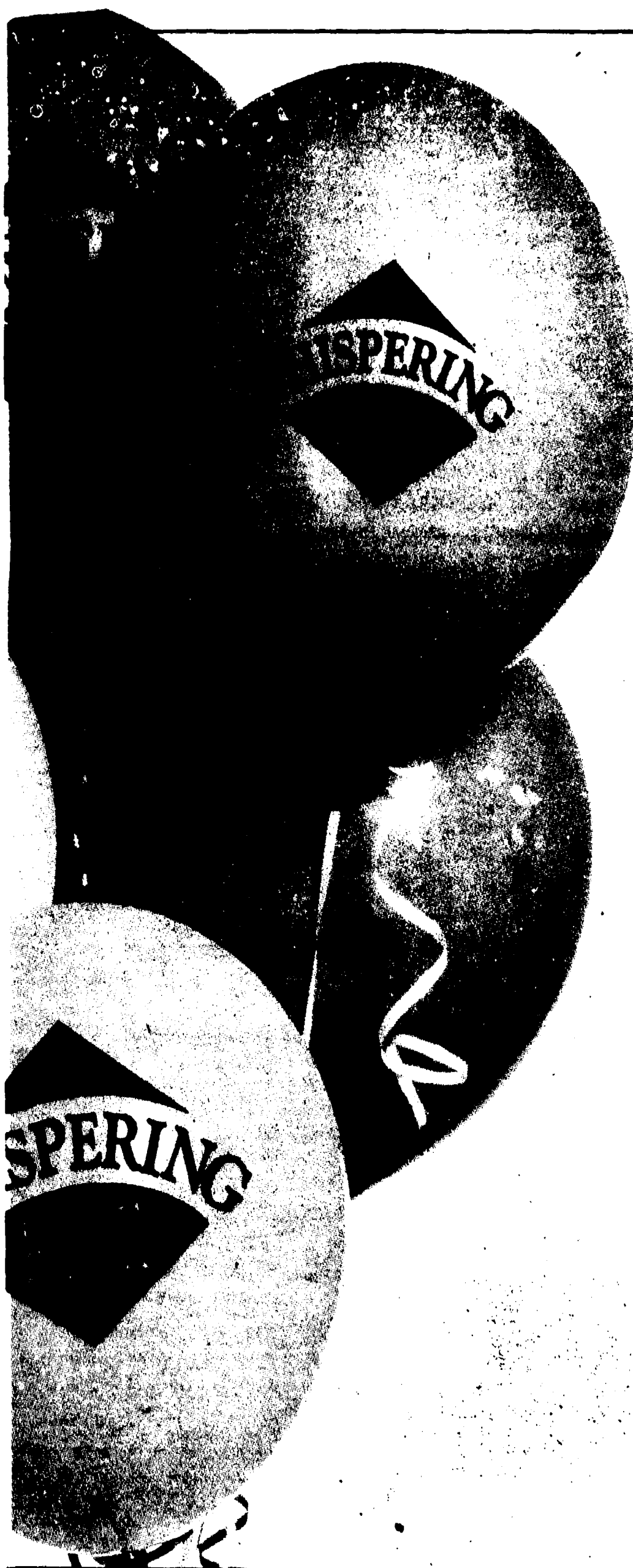
The only noted change, thus far, will be along Broad Street

which will be closed from Rector to Front Street to create a linear park with another esplanade that will connect to the one lining the waterfront.

The project will also feature a marina with boat slips to compliment the city's existing marina. The existing sewer system will also be separated

to improve the quality of the water flowing into the Arthur Kill.

With the project firmly on schedule, officials expect to commence demolition on certain properties by May 1 and construction should commence by July 1.



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WOMEN

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LET'S GET TOGETHER

Single white female, 28, 6', 145 lbs, never married, no children, brown hair and eyes, attractive, fairly fit, enjoys dining out, museums, music, movies and the outdoors. Seeking a single white male, 28 to 37, who enjoys evenings out, day trips and good conversations. Hudson county. BOX 28463

STARTING OVER

40 yrs young, divorced white, mother of one, 5'6", blonde/blue, attractive, sincere, affectionate, great sense of humor, loves long walks, the beach, candlelight dinners. Seeking male, 35 to 45, non-smoker, warm, caring, with same qualities, who loves children, for friendship and possibly more. Hudson County. BOX 28474

ONE MAN WOMAN

Single white female, 63, affectionate, caring, faithful, full figured woman, in search of marriage minded, single or divorced, white male, for everlasting love and happiness. BOX 29259

ARE YOU A NICE GUY?

Single, white, professional female, 47, never married, no children, 5'8", dark hair and eyes, would like to meet a nice single, white male, 47 to 50, for friendship and companionship. I enjoy good conversation, music, the outdoors, a sense of humor. Southern, Middlesex County area. BOX 30777

TOUCH OF LIFE

40 yr old, single white female, 5'11", green eyes. Seeking a single white male, 30 to 45, same height or taller, good layed back, non-smoker, who respects me. Enjoys movie, concerts, bowling, beaches and dining out. BOX 13519

SHORT & SWEET

A 53 yr old female who like the outdoors, is searching for a man, 55 to 58, with a sense of humor. BOX 13945

WHEN IN DOUBT-HUMBLE
and then call this witty and winsome, professional, with classically striking looks, wishing to meet amiable, good natured, sit and round, tall, Jewish gentleman, 55 to 63. We value character, intelligence, humor and hope to share neutering friendship filled with compassion and communication, giggles, interests and ? BOX 22195

AMERICAN CAL

Shapely, charming, and caring widow, early 70's, loves dining out, traveling, and walking. Seeking for a male with similar interest. Hudson County. BOX 35905

FEEL THE LOVE

Attractive white widow, 50's, I like the outdoors, biking, riding and walking. Seeking a man in his 50's, for a long term relationship. BOX 36335

IF U R THE 1.50 AM

I am a single white senior that is attractive, self employed, healthy and fun with a great figure. I have all of the qualities to make someone very happy. I am looking to meet a single Asian male, who is accomplished and very healthy, 58-70. If you think you're interested get in touch with me... BOX 36038

ONLY THE BEST!!

Looking for accomplished Asian, 60 to 70, healthy and non-smoker, for a very upscale good looking Caucasian senior who is very accomplished and talented! If only the best will do and you are looking for the cream of the crop, this is where it has its roots. BOX 12197

STILL AVAILABLE

Intelligent, gourmet cooking Italian female. Seeking a Asian male, non-smoker and very healthy, 60 to 70. If interested leave number and area code. BOX 13292

ONLY TIME WILL TELL

Healthy, 165 lbs, 5'5" female, 65, non-smoker, non-drinker. Enjoys dancing, dining out, walks and movies. Seeking a male same age with same interest. BOX 36004

A GREAT CATCH

A 35 yr old, petite, white female, enjoys outdoor activities, poetry readings, movies and dining out. Seeks male with same interests, please call. BOX 36421

UPSCALE SENIOR

I need a new oriental, or Asian dance partner. I'm a blonde up scale senior, good looking, with an attractive figure. BOX 10673

REAL MY NUMBER

Witty, appealing professional values character, intelligence and humor. Desires flexible, fit, tall Jewish gentleman, 55 to 63, ready to share loving, nurturing friendship with compassion, warmth, laughter, interests. BOX 28455

SEEKING A GENTLEMAN

Cultured, artistic, divorced Asian female, very romantic, attractive, healthy, youthful looking/minded. Enjoys travel, art, literature, music and poetry. Seeking calm, romantic, attractive, decent white man of wisdom, 39 to 45, 5'10" plus, medium build, for friendship first, possibly long term relationship. Bergen County. BOX 29281



MEN

Call 1-888-829-6362

BODY AND SOUL

Pretty, kindhearted, professional woman, youthful 30, 5'10", divorced, loves concerts, opera, the outdoors. Sandy Hook. Seeks lively, intellectually aware, spiritually evolved man, 40 to 60, tall, caring, for partnership and long term relationship. Hudson county. BOX 29283

MISSED YOUR CALL

Hello, Mark from Somerset 43 yr old, you left a message in my box please call back I'm very interested the number is 37758. BOX 36176

CATCH MY BREATH

I'm a 31 yr old, 5'3", single white female, romantic, humorous, and non-smoker. Enjoy music, cooking, sketch, shopping and sports. Seeking a single white intelligent male honest, adorable, and likes good conversation. BOX 36502

GIVING YOU MY ALL

60 yr old, attractive white female, 5'4", 123 lbs, thoughtful and sincere. Seeking a white male, 55 to 70, intelligent who values intelligent woman. I enjoy skiing, traveling, cooking, hiking and much more. BOX 42791

LAUREN - DROP YOUR

Pants. Kiss kidding! Witty, appealing professional values character, intelligence, and humor. Desires flexible, fit, tall Jewish gentleman, 55 to 63, ready to share loving, nurturing friendship with compassion, warmth, laughter, interest. BOX 22194

YOUNG LOVE!

I'm a 53 yr old, single white female, with a great sense of humor, enjoys dining out and music. Looking for a single man, 53 to 58, with similar interests. BOX 35584

SINGLE MOM

Catholic divorced white mother of two, female, 42, 5'8", non-smoker, social drinker. Enjoys adventure, traveling, music, dining out and walks on the beach. Seeking a white male, 35 to 50, tall, financially secure, with good sense humor. BOX 35683

LIVE LIFE...

49 yr old, single white woman is seeking a tall single white, emotionally and financially secure man, with a good heart. I appreciate honesty and loyalty in return for my company. I love life and living it to the fullest. BOX 35875

COME SEE ABOUT ME...

31 yr old, attractive, 5'3", single white female with an hour glass shape, blonde hair and olive complexion. I'm generous, loyal and have a great sense of humor. I'm extremely romantic and I'm looking for a single white male, who has similar interests...if you qualify, call me. BOX 36500

BEST FOR LIFE!

Professional, young 60, 5'7", spontaneous widow. Seeks tall, fit, professional, secure, romantic gentleman, 50 to 60, with good sense of humor. Loves to travel, play golf and take walks. BOX 12321

GOLDEN YEARS

Young 75 yr old widow, 5', petite, attractive, with blonde hair and hazel eyes, is looking for good looking gentleman, 74 to 76, to share golden years. BOX 35791

BE MY VALENTINE

Single white female, 26, petite, with dark eyes and dark hair. In search of a single white male, 26 to 33. I enjoy going out for long walks, movies, dining out, hiking, going to the beach and traveling. BOX 16143

NO MORE GAMES!

Attractive, 23 yr old, Hispanic female, who is tired of games, is seeking a single white male, 25 to 35, handsome, passionate, to develop a long term relationship. BOX 35172

WE SHOULD MEET!

Divorced white female, 63 yr old, 5'2", 106 lbs, enjoys movies, reading, dancing, the outdoors, all music, animal, and much more. Seeking a single male, for great conversation to a night out on the town. BOX 10733

SPOIL ME WITH YOUR

Affection... Passionate, creative, intelligent, loving, professional single white female, 44, 5'8", attractive, fit, blonde/green, financially secure. Loves the outdoors, quiet dining, art, movies. Seeks white male, 39 to 50, warm, caring, playful, affectionate, financially secure, humorous, for special times, long term relationship. Hudson County. BOX 29254

LET'S GET TOGETHER!

Single white female, 5'3", fit, attractive, dark brown hair and light brown eyes, enjoys animals, movies, reading, the outdoors, music and much more. Is seeking a single white male, 30 to 40, for dating and possible relationship. BOX 10771

TIME ON MY HANDS

Single female, in my 40's, 5'6", attractive, looking for a single male, 35 to 50, for friendship. BOX 11193

LOVE TO MEAN FROM U

Single tall, attractive, black female, 47, 5'8", 153 lbs, dark brown complexion, with no children. Seeking a tall, physically fit, single, divorced black or Hispanic male, 50 to 60, for friendship, and possible long term relationship, with a good sense of humor. BOX 11091

I ONLY NEED YOU

Divorced white female, 58, 5', with brown hair and eyes, very outgoing, fun loving. Likes all kinds of fun things, hope you are honest, sincere and looking for a long term relationship. BOX 11102

LET'S CHAT!

38 yr old, 5'5", fit, Afro American female, Christian, professional, never married, childless, enjoys movies, jazz music, reading, the outdoors as much more, is seeking a Christian male, of any race, for friendship first and maybe more. BOX 11546

LET'S MEET

Single white, professional female, 27, enjoys nature hiking, traveling, theater, music and more. Seeking a single male, non-smoker with similar interests. BOX 11946

ON THE HUNT

Are you looking for single white female, who's intelligent, attractive, and fun loving. If you are a single white male, non-smoker, between the ages 36 and 64, who likes dancing, New York and Atlantic City and live in the Union County area, give me a call. BOX 13253

He didn't see you blush over the phone.
And you didn't see him blush either.
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HONESTY IS THE KEY

Divorced white, single mom, non-smoker, pretty dark eyes, loyal, intelligent. Enjoys writing poetry, movies, dancing, is vivacious, versatile. Seeking single male, 42 to 60, non-smoker, non-drinker, educated, children okay. Seeking someone with similar qualities. No head games. Hudson County. BOX 29251

NATURAL BEAUTY

Divorced female, 38, 5'5", natural red head, college educated, seeks divorced or single male up to 45, caring, sincere and educated, who enjoys music, outdoors and family. BOX 29268

LOVE IS ALL WE NEED!

Professional, 46 yr old, divorced white female, with brown hair and green eyes, enjoys long walks, movies, hiking, golfing and much more, is seeking a single male, with similar interests, to develop a long term relationship. BOX 35040

TALL AND ATTRACTIVE

36 yr old, green eyed, tall, voluptuous brunette female. I enjoy working out, music, comedy clubs, shooting pool, sports, and movies. Looking for a tall, spontaneous, single man with a good sense of humor. BOX 36287



WOMEN

Call 1-888-829-6362

SOMEONE SPECIAL

45 yr old, divorced white male, looking and seeking that special person, 32 to 45, white, Asian or Hispanic who enjoys travel, outdoor activities and quiet evenings at home, possible long term relationship, children also welcome. If you like to be treated special, I'm the one. Middlesex County. BOX 27962

LOOKING FOR FUN

Single white male, 36, into music, sports, New York City, the shore. Looking for single white female, 25 to 40, with similar interests, as well as new interests. No head games. Honesty and trust. Marmouth County. BOX 27965

VISION OF LOVE...

51 yr old, 6'1, 185 lbs, single white male, enjoys romance, dancing, movies, theatre, museums and quiet time at home. Seeking an attractive, smart, humorous female, 45 or older, for dating. BOX 12296

SENT FROM HEAVEN

A 38 yr old, Christian male 5'9", 198 lbs, I like weight lifting, roller skating and going to church. Seeking an honest Christian female, petite, loyal 25 to 35, race unimportant. God Bless You. BOX 36182

RECLUSE BY CHOICE

35 yr old, 5'10", 170 lb, single white male, contractor, handsome, low key, loyal with no children, loner, smoker and non-drinker. Likes camping, concerts, considering moving out west. Seeks child-free, independent woman, 18 to 40. BOX 40268

MARRIAGE MINDSET

Single white professional male, 29, 6', hazel eyes, brown hair, well built. Loves dining out, movies, plays, traveling, boating. Seeks single white female, 23 to 30, for a long lasting relationship. Hudson county. BOX 29244

LOVER BY CHOICE

Single, 35, white male, 5'10", 170 lbs, handsome, loyal, low key, smoker, non-drinker, no drugs, reclusive type, contractor, child free, likes camping, rock and country concerts. Seeks child free woman, 18 to 40, maybe move out west, maybe not. Warren County. BOX 27929

CHARLES ARE GOOD

California native, now living in NEW YORK, interested in meeting a woman in her 20's. If this is you please respond. BOX 36184

ON THE LOOK OUT

I'm a white male 40 yr, 6', 190 lbs., seeking a woman that's affectionate, honest and sincere. Have a beautiful day! BOX 36338

WELCOME 2 MY WORLD

Single white male 32, seeking a female 30 to 40 for romance and possible relationship that enjoys going out and having a good time. Leave your name and number! BOX 42787

GUY NUMBER!

I'm a divorced 48, 5'8" male romantic, affectionate, active, and a non-smoker, enjoys dancing, hiking, reading and movies. Seeking a female 40 to 50 yr with same similarities. BOX 13138

WHERE ARE YOU?

Single white male, 38, 5'5", good shape, handsome, down to earth, great sense of humor, brown hair and eyes, outdoorsy, intelligent, warm. Enjoys travel, movies, hiking. Looking for a smart, cute female, 25 to 30, for possible long term relationship. Hudson County. BOX 28458

LATINA MINDSET

Attractive single male, 31, 175 lbs, professional. Seeks attractive, friendly Latin female, for possible committed relationship. I enjoy walking, theatre, dining out and travel. Hudson county. BOX 28461

GREAT TIMES AWAITS

I'm a divorced white male, 68, 5'9", 190 lbs, non-smoker, enjoys country music, swimming, movies, dining out and outdoors. Seeking a white female 58 to 65 petite for good companionship maybe more. BOX 42784

WARM EMBRACE

Single white male, mid 40's and attractive, non-smoker, very likeable and enjoyable to be with. Enjoys the outdoors, museums, dining out and in. Looking for an open, honest single woman, with like interests. If you're interested, call me. BOX 35865

LET ME ROMANCE YOU

42 yr old divorced white male, enjoys the beaches, music, movies and dining out. In search of a divorced black female, 37 to 45, who likes to be romanced. BOX 36026

YOUNG LOOKING

Single white Aquarian male, 34, 5'10" with medium build, good looking and a former Marine War Hero, would like to meet a good looking Asian female, 28 plus, to hold hands and laugh with. Non-smoker preferred. Friendship first. BOX 12244

MARRIAGE ORIENTED

44, 5'10", 170 lbs, blonde/blue, trim, athletic build, Irish/German, handsome, financially established, soft spoken gentleman, with traditional Mid Western values. Enjoys country drives and quiet towns. Seeks warm, caring, feminine woman, 34 to 42, with attractive figure, family oriented. Children welcome. BOX 29250

ALL ABOUT ME...

6'3", 190 lb male, dark skin with athletic build, humorous, outgoing and very romantic. BOX 36786

LOVE HAS NO COLOR

True Christian, 6', Italian gentleman, young 52, handsome, very compassionate, understanding, sincere and kind. Looking for special lady, with similar qualities, who still believes in friendship and true love forever. Bergen County. BOX 29278

MADE TO MEET

Single white professional male, 33, looking for a single female, age, race, or nationality unimportant. Likes quiet times at home and romantic evenings. BOX 15974

HONEST, GOOD LOOKING

Single, white professional Jewish male, 28, 5'10", athletic, fit, brown hair, hazel eyes, good looking and friendly. Enjoys movies, shopping, book stores, dinner, conversations, quite evenings. In search of single white female, 21 to 34, with similar interests. Friendship first, with possible relationship. BOX 26522

ROMANCE 101

Single white male, 43 yr old, 5'8", 200 lbs, short brown hair, and green eyes, husky well proportioned build, never married, no children, enjoys dining out, movies, good music, spectator sports, outdoors, nice conversation, parks, malls, and museums. Looking for a single female, who is open, honest, and a good communicator. BOX 34370

LET'S GET TOGETHER

Single white Irish male, 180 lbs, 6'2", enjoy hiking, biking, and the beach. Seeking a single white female, 27 to 37, for friendship and more. BOX 34713

WANTER ROMANCE

Single male, 59, 5'10", salt/pepper hair, olive complexion, smoker, would like to meet a trim, good hearted woman, who would be interested in companionship. BOX 36831

TIME MARCHES ON

Single male, 50 yr old, 6', 200 lbs, dark brown hair, and eyes, likes dining out, the shore, sports, movies, plays, music, looking for a single or divorced white female, slim build, no small children, 39 to 50, and likes to have fun. BOX 36942

CAN WE TALK?

Single white male, 6'1", enjoys poetry and more, seeking a single female, with similar interests. BOX 10424

GOALS & ASPIRATIONS

Divorced white professional male, 45 yr old, 5'10", 170 lbs, brown eyes, light brown hair, father of two, physically fit, college educated, and goal oriented, honest, traditional, independent, and secure. Enjoys movies, roller skating, garage sales. Seeking a sweet, devoted, honest, Christian white female, 38 to 45, average build and neat appearance. BOX 10780

A LOVE CONNECTION

Fun, upbeat, nice guy, 5'10", 225 lbs, easy to talk to, fun, rugged looking and down to earth. Looking to connect with a kind, bright, passionate woman. BOX 10951

SIMILAR DELIGHTS

30 yr old, 6'3", 220 lb, single male, enjoys the outdoors, country music and more. Seeking a single white female, 25 to 35, who share similar delights. BOX 11578

LOVE IS IN THE AIR!

43 yr old, 6', 180 lbs, fit, single white male, never married, professional, educated, enjoys movies, working out, good conversations, the outdoors, hiking, and much more, is seeking a single female, mature, loving, caring, over 30, of any race, to develop a long term relationship. BOX 11595

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

51 yr old, single white male, handsome, fit enjoys dining out, golf, walks, movies and the beach, seeking a single white female, 41 to 52, for a long term loving relationship. BOX 11657

LADY OF MY DREAM

Single white male, 38, shy, 5'11", 175 lbs, smoker, home owner, employed, also has depression disability. Seeks a single female, child free, age open, for friendship and companion. BOX 11735

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YOUR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

POPCORN™ "The Mexican"

Makes You Want To Take A Siesta



By Michael S. Goldberger

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent



It was supposed to be the movie match made in Heaven. But when Julia Roberts and Brad Pitt get together in "The Mexican," they wind up making the film from Hell. The sparks don't fly. The chemistry doesn't mix. And our only consolation comes in knowing that even powerful Hollywood can't force feed us these two pretty faces against our will. At least not without direction more astute than the sort

that he quit. Which poses a tragic dilemma for Jerry. Yet fearing for his life, he perseveres. And each time he is told that this very last job will finally mean his emancipation.

This latest assignment has him traveling down Mexico way to purloin an antique pistol steeped in folklore. But it's hard to get the story of this gun right, and depends on who's telling the tale. In this so-called comedy's only decent bit of shtick, different variations of this pistol's mythology, crafted in sepia flashback, serve as a running gag.

Meanwhile, back in L.A., Samantha is a wellspring of psychological catch phrases, no doubt gleaned from a lifetime of imbibing motivational speakers on Public Television....you know, the modern day Svengalis they feature during the beg-a-thons. In fact, when she's kidnapped by hit man Crazy Leroy (James Gandolfini) as the Mob's insurance that Jerry will complete his mission, Samantha proudly informs her captor that she's got her junior achievement gangster to go to group therapy with her.

In short, this poster girl for touchy-feely sentiment is entirely annoying. Of course, Leroy doesn't feel that way. Call it the Stockholm Syndrome with a dab of cinematic fantasy. He thinks she's charming. She feels likewise. Dishing the dirt like old girlfriends, captor and captive all but exchange recipes. In hotels, diners and cars, the relationship talk runs rampant. Too bad that Leroy will have to kill his comely charge if things don't work out for her boyfriend south of the border. Otherwise, being taken hostage seems like a great way to meet

your soul mate.

But employing such exaggerated story motifs isn't what ultimately makes "The Mexican" come up short. In fact, the notion that Gandolfini's sensitive bruiser might be able to help the lady fair sort out her love life is a democratic motion picture impertinence with roots in 1930s screwball comedy.

The mechanism provides a funny moment or two. However, by never deciding on a temper or a tone for itself, director Verbinski's overlong effort fails to establish just what sort of a film it's trying to be. And while the commercials would lead you to believe it's a comedy, only a few minutes in the theater convinces that this is a prime example of false advertising.

Here's the problem. Whether he knows it or not, Mr. Verbinski pretty much attempts the impossible when he mixes violence, R-rated language and would-be gags. It can be done, mind you. It's called a black comedy. But this requires a screenplay to match, wherein the writer employs sarcasm, wit and creativity to juxtapose and comically reconcile the movie's disparate elements. Sadly, hardly any wit and even less creativity are recognizable in this movie's script.

And then, as if to add insult to injury, there is again the matter of Julia and Brad. Both decent actors in their own right, together these stars of the first inmagnitude bring out the worst in each other. Coming across more like whiny spoiled refugees from Suburbia than the pair of struggling lovers they're supposed to be portraying, the Western Hemisphere's most well-scrubbed sexual icons might be believable playing the title roles in "Ken and Barbie: The Movie." But the lousy job they do in "The Mexican" is, quite frankly, almost un-American.

"The Mexican," rated R, is a DreamWorks release directed by Gore Verbinski and stars Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and James Gandolfini. Running time: 125 minutes

James Earl Jones Speaks For Film Preservation

AREA—The Library of Congress Film Preservation Tour which Jones played a part. Thirteen other films will be shown in the series through March 16.

Actor James Earl Jones, best known for providing the voice of Mufasa in "The Lion King" and of Darth Vader in the "Star Wars" trilogy, was on hand to lend his support for the project.

"Movies reflect us as a nation and are the widest ranging expression of our culture," Jones said at a news conference.

He added that just because a movie exists today, it doesn't mean that it always will. "It's important to bring awareness to that," said Jones.

The film series began on Feb. 22 with a reception and screening of "Big Business" and Stanley

The films were selected by the arts center from a list of 36 films presented by the Library of Congress.

Although the tour's goal is to heighten awareness of preserving old films, FitzSimons also wants to make movie-going fun for viewers and offer them a taste of the old days.

More than half of the films made in America before 1950 no longer exist. They are either lost or have deteriorated beyond repair, according to Mike Mashon, the curator of Moving Images Section of the Library of Congress.

Maureen McGovern And John Pizzarelli To Perform At Union County Arts Center

RAHWAY—Maureen McGovern and John Pizzarelli will perform at the Union County Arts Center, Rahway, on April 7 at 8 p.m. The John Pizzarelli Trio and the Big Band Swing Orchestra, directed by Ray Kennedy, will accompany this blending of two great jazz musicians.

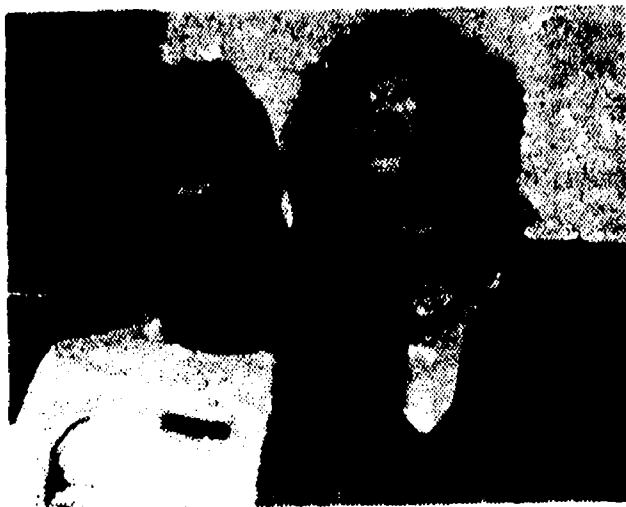
Maureen McGovern's 28-year career spans recordings, concerts, theater, films, television and radio. No stranger to touring, last year she captured the hearts of audiences around the United States with her definitive portrayal of 'Anna' in the National Tour of *The King and I*. She also has a successful track record pairing up with legendary musicians such as Mel Torme and the Duke Ellington Orchestra, directed by the late Mercer Ellington.

John Pizzarelli has built a win-

ning career on classic standards, late-night ballads and his highly regarded guitar work. He has created a sound and an atmosphere that have won over a new audience that wants to swing and swoon in the rebirth of the big band sound. Along with the John Pizzarelli Trio, his latest release on Telarc Records is "Let There Be Love."

Call (732) 499-8226 for more information.

Union County Arts Center is a regional performing arts venue. Its wide array of offerings includes theater, music, film, dance and headliner entertainment. The Westfield Symphony Orchestra performs regularly at the Arts Center under its designation as resident orchestra of this vaudeville-era theater claimed by many to be the most beautiful theater in the state.



Gore Verbinski displays. And certainly not without a better script than the one J.H. Wyman tries to pawn off on us.

Happily, you'll be planning to avoid this film. So none of this is your worry. That is unless political considerations beyond your control put you in a theater where this miscarriage of motion picture calculation is being shown. In that case, your only hope is that the usher will find a reason to eject you. And the sooner, the better.

For starters, Julia and Brad as bickering lovers Samantha Barzel and Jerry Wellbach are about as credible as the apologetic telemarketer who called you during dinner last week. And they both have that toothpaste advertisement glow. Isn't there a picture of them flossing in your dentist's waiting room?

In any case, we're supposed to believe that the Mob is into Jerry, poor schmuck that he is, ever since he accidentally crashed into the head honcho's car. As the story goes, the fender-bender proved especially embarrassing for the Don because when the police arrived, he just happened to have some human cargo in the trunk....alive, thankfully. Nevertheless, he was promptly shipped up the river for his troubles. Ever since then, Jerry has helped organized crime continue a proud American tradition dating back to Colonial times: indentured servitude.

Naturally, the accidental mobster's career path doesn't lend itself to the type of relationship Samantha wants. She demands



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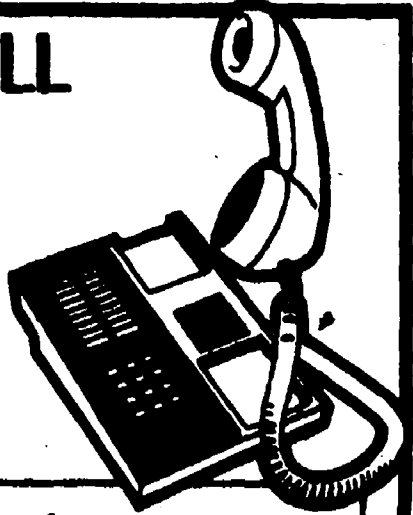
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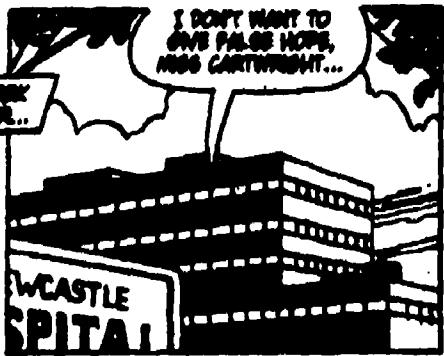
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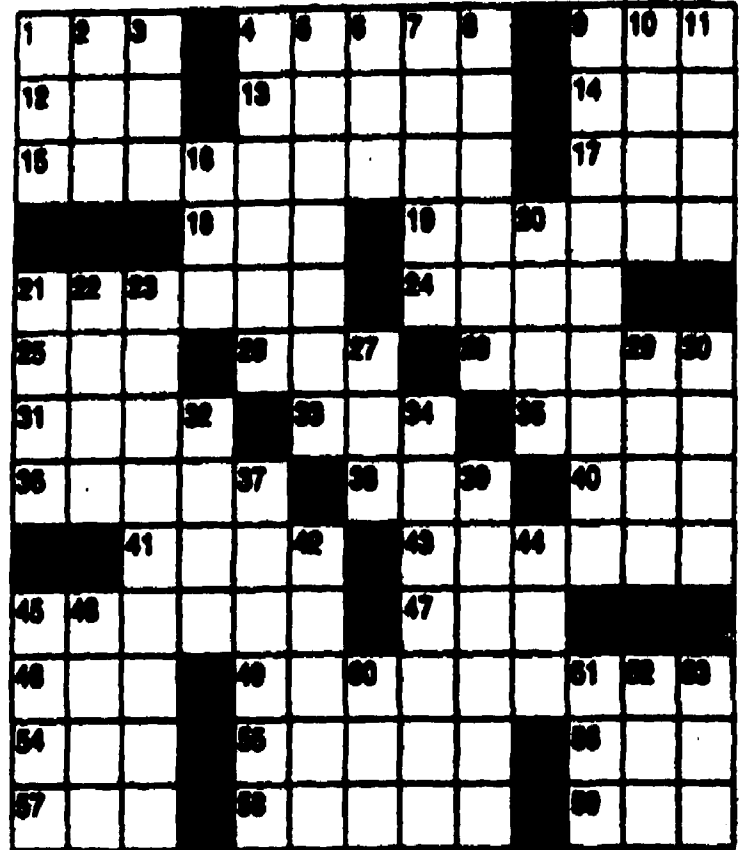
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Comics & Puzzles

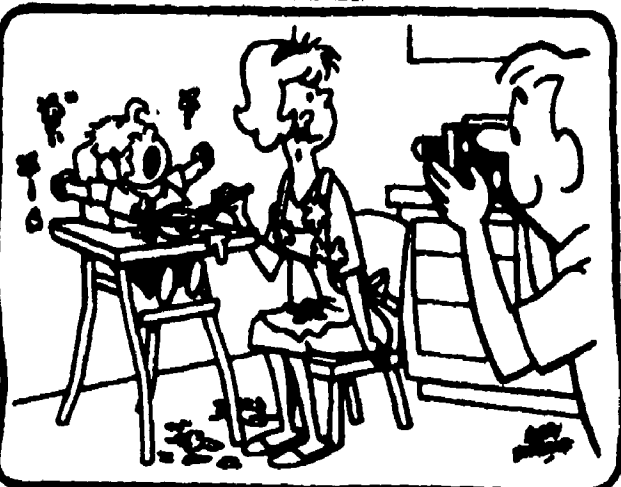


- ACROSS
- 1. Seltzer
 - 4. Broomstick
 - 9. Whimsical
 - 12. Unchained
 - 13. Proverbial
 - 14. "... boy - girl"
 - 15. Friction
 - 17. Arise
 - 18. Baby food
 - 19. Grass-cutting tool
 - 21. Large desert
 - 24. Asian noodle
 - 25. Acropolis
 - 26. Infant
 - 28. Egg-shaped
 - 31. Chef's additive
 - 33. Beaver's creation
 - 35. Therefore
 - 36. Haven
 - 38. Brylcreem
 - 40. Breakfast
 - 41. Lamb's pseudonym
 - 43. Also-ran
 - 45. Use marriage
 - 47. Mainman
 - 48. Even explosive
 - 49. Jockey who won four Derbies
 - 54. Ben-El-Mechaiech
 - 55. Josh

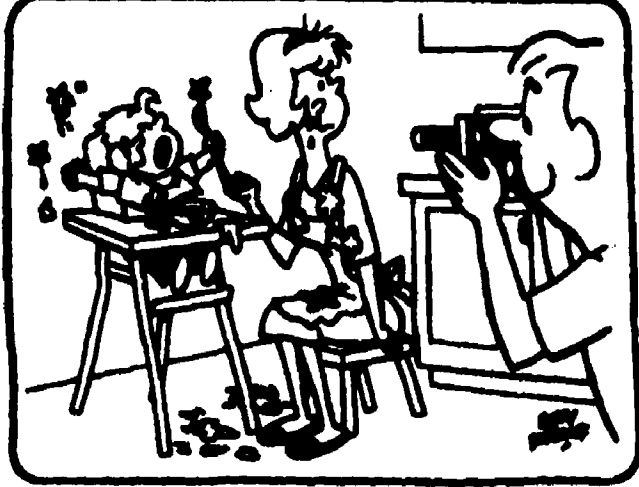


- DOWN
- 1. Curved line
 - 2. Chum
 - 3. Tingo
 - 4. Turkey's capital
 - 5. At minimum
 - 6. "... not choose to run"
 - 7. Vice
 - 8. Islet
 - 9. Broken teller
 - 10. Thermometer
 - 11. Application
 - 12. Zeno
 - 13. Try dog breed
 - 14. Map, in English
 - 15. QB-turned-sportscenter
 - 16. Bookkeeper (Abba)
 - 17. Grotto
 - 18. Section of London
 - 19. Neighborhood
 - 20. Good-luck charm
 - 21. Frenchie
 - 22. Investor
 - 23. Shanty
 - 24. Spade
 - 25. Zen
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 - 52. Try dog breed
 - 53. Map, in English
 - 54. QB-turned-sportscenter
 - 55. Bookkeeper (Abba)

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTONOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



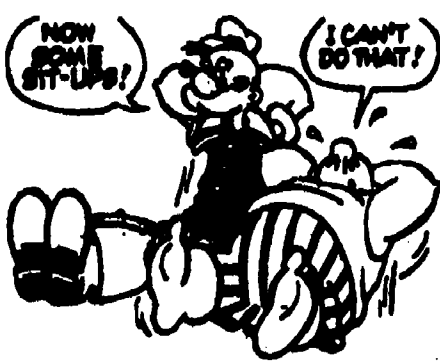
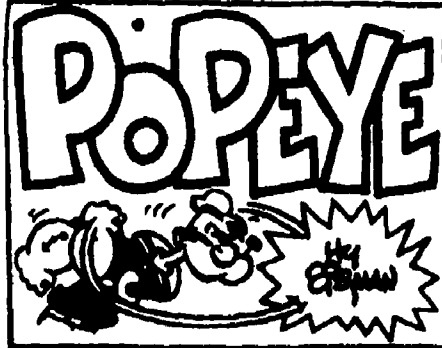
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R M I P O A M O K I O O S G O
E D U N E T H E L M E R T Z H
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O N N O C P A T B U T T R A M
L J I E G G M F D B U D D Y C
C A Y L I I N O S T A W R D M
X W E D A R M O C V T G S R D
P O N L K P F A J I G F E C E

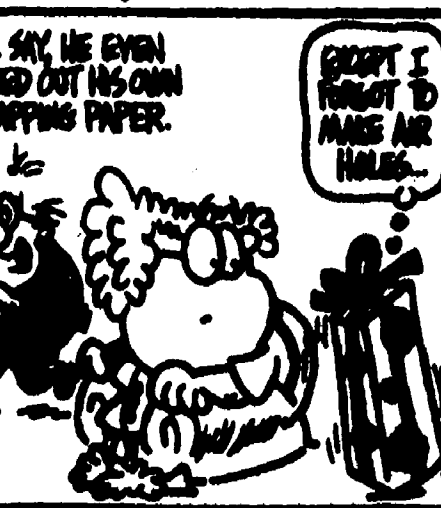
Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

- | | | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Amigo | Cohort | Ed McMahon | Pal |
| Buddy | Companion | Ethel Mertz | Pat Sullivan |
| Chester | Comrade | Friend | Robin |
| Chum | Dr. Watson | Gabby Hayes | |

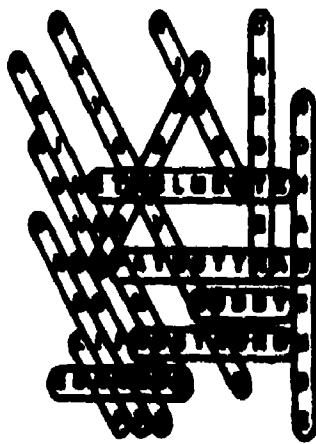
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THE SPATS



by JEFF PICKERING



Hocus-Focus answers
1. Curved line
2. Chum
3. Tingo
4. Turkey's capital
5. At minimum
6. "... not choose to run"
7. Vice
8. Islet
9. Broken teller
10. Thermometer
11. Application
12. Zeno
13. Try dog breed
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53. Map, in English
54. QB-turned-sportscenter
55. Bookkeeper (Abba)

Everyone loves the comics page

OBITUARIES

Santos Rivera, 63 of Perth Amboy

Mr. Santos C. Rivera of Allentown, Pa., (formerly of Perth Amboy) died March 13 at St. Luke's Hospital, Allentown, Pa. He was 63.

Born in San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, he had lived in Perth Amboy from 1957 to 1989, when he moved to Allentown, Pa.

Surviving are his wife, Lydia (Muniz) Rivera; three sons, Daniel S. Rivera of Allentown, Pa., Robert Rivera of Woodbridge and Santos Rivera Jr. of Perth Amboy; five daughters, Miriam Rivera of Passaic, Noemi Torres of Hershey, Pa., Irma Rivera, Esther Rivera and Elisa Castillo, all of Allentown, Pa.; his mother, Carmen Ramos of Perth Amboy; four brothers, Thomas Rivera of Puerto Rico, Efrain Rivera of Perth Amboy and the Rev. Luis Rivera of Michigan and David Rivera of Puerto Rico; four sisters, Ramona Alvarez of Perth Amboy, Nereida Rivera and Brunilda Colon, both of Puerto Rico and Hortencia Alvarez of Connecticut and 20 grandchildren.

Santos Rivera, 63 of Perth Amboy

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Theresa Varga, 83 of Perth Amboy

Mrs. Theresa Rose Glazer Varga of Perth Amboy died March 13 at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center, Plainfield. She was 83.

She was a lifelong resident of Perth Amboy.

She had been employed by the General Cigar Factory in Perth Amboy, by Foster-Wheeler in Carteret and most recently in the housekeeping department at Raritan Bay Medical Center's Perth Amboy Division.

Mrs. Varga was a communicant of Our Lady of Hungary R.C. Church, Perth Amboy.

Her husband, Stephen, died in 1975. Three sisters, Mary Mizerak, Helen Verdjak and Elizabeth Gottlieb and three brothers, Joseph, Anthony and Andrew Glazer are all deceased.

Surviving are three sisters, Emma Baumgartner of South Amboy, Rose Silagyi of Metuchen and Anna Steinbender of West Germany; two brothers, Frank Glazer of Clifton and Paul Glazer of West Germany and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Irene Mostowski of Woodbridge

Mrs. Irene Lillian Mostowski of Woodbridge died March 15 in St. Joseph's Hospital, Paterson. She was 68.

Born in Scranton, Pa., she lived in Irvington before moving to Woodbridge in 1973.

She was a senior electronics assembler with Q.E.I. in Springfield for the past seven years. Earlier, she had been employed with Lockheed in Plainfield for 23 years until 1990.

She was a member of the Plainfield Traveling Senior Citizens and the Lockheed Stardusters.

Surviving are a son, Joseph; a daughter, Helene; her mother, Mrs. Helen Basil Olenick; a brother, Edward Olenick; and two grandchildren.

**Aging seems to be the only available way to live a long time.
- Danile-Francois-Espirit Auber*



Garland Webb, Jr. Worked in Perth Amboy

Mr. Garland Webb Jr. of New Brunswick died March 9 at home. He was 59.

Born in Franklinton, N.C., he resided in Newark for 21 years before moving to New Brunswick in 1989.

He was employed by Vantage Motors Inc., Perth Amboy, as a detailer specialist for the past five years.

Mr. Webb was a member of Antioch Christian Church, New Brunswick.

Surviving are his wife, Portia L. Webb; a son, Garland Webb III of New Brunswick; two stepdaughters, Ginile Weeks of Greenville, N.C. and Darnette Weeks of New Brunswick; a stepson, James Weeks of Pittsburgh; a sister, Dorothy Person of Piscataway; two brothers, Julius Webb of South Brunswick and John Webb of Piscataway; two aunts, Katiare Jones of Freehold and Viola Campbells of Louisburg, N.C.; a grandson, Garland Webb IV of Boston; his mother-in-law, Martha Wilson of New Brunswick; and 13 step-grandchildren.

George P. Schodowski of Edison

Mr. George P. Schodowski of Edison died March 12 at home. He was 76.

Born in Newark, he moved to Edison 40 years ago.

He was a spot welder with Ford Motor Company, Edison for 25 years before retiring 14 years ago.

Mr. Schodowski was a member of the United Auto Workers Local 980, Edison and Edison Elks Lodge 2487.

Surviving are his wife, Wilma; two daughters, Mrs. Ilsa Schmid and Nancy; and three grandchildren.

Carl R. Wood, 61 of Edison

Mr. Carl R. Wood of Edison died March 11 in Oswego Memorial Hospital, New York. He was 61.

Born in Honesdale, Pa., he moved to Edison 30 years ago.

He was a member of the Edison Fire Department for 22 years, working as a firefighter and inspector before retiring in 1994.

Mr. Wood was a member of the Rod Benders Fishing Club, Edison and the Copper Hill Gun Club, Flemington.

Surviving are his wife of 30 years, Judith; four sons, David, John, Paul and Matthew; and five grandchildren.

Flora Amrein, 79 of Edison

Mrs. Flora Amrein of Edison died March 13 at Barbara E. Cheung Memorial Hospital, Edison. She was 79.

She was a lifelong resident of Edison.

She had been employed by Rutgers University as a secretary in New Brunswick before retiring in 1982.

Mrs. Amrein was a communicant of Guardian Angel R.C. Church, Edison and a member of the church's Holy Name Society.

Surviving are a son, Joseph of North Brunswick; two daughters, Judy Ackerman of Indian Harbour Beach, Fla. and Karen of Los Angeles; and five grandchildren, Katie, Koren, Kasey, Shevonne and Shayna.

Frank Montalto, 85 Worked in Metuchen

Mr. Frank Montalto of Nutley died February 19 in JFK Medical Center, Edison. He was 85.

Born in Jersey City, he lived in Nutley for many years.

Before retiring in 1971, he worked for 20 years in the pre-delivery repair department of Ford Motor Company, Metuchen, where he was a member of the United Auto Workers Local 980.

Mr. Montalto was an Army veteran of World War II and a member of the Italian-American Club of New Brunswick.

Surviving are a son, Frank A. Montalto; two sisters, Theresa M. Rose and Lucy Chambers and several nieces and nephews.

Amelia Stryker, 83 of Edison

Mrs. Amelia L. Frey Stryker of Edison died March 14 in JFK Hospice, Edison. She was 83.

Born in New Brunswick, she lived in Franklin Township before moving to Edison in 1946.

During World War II, she was a telephone operator for New Jersey Bell in New Brunswick and had also worked at Camp Kilmer in Edison during the war. She later worked for the Edison Board of Education for three years, and most recently, she worked for John Wiley Publishing Co., Somerset, for 10 years before retiring in 1983.

Mrs. Stryker was a member of Stelton Baptist Church, Edison and a member of the Women's Society of the church.

Surviving are her husband of 62 years, Milburn Leroy Stryker; three sons, Foster LeRoy Stryker of Mount Laurel, D. Gary Stryker of Edison and Wayne K. Stryker of Edison; two daughters, Sharon Hill of Montague and Deborah Adams of Hightstown; two sisters, Olga Voorhees and Janet Grand Jean, both of Edison; 10 grandchildren, Stephen Stryker, B. Scott Stryker, Lori Ann Stryker, Stephen Slaven, Scott Slaven, David Stryker, Eric Stryker, Douglas Stryker, Buck Adams and Stacy Adams and three great-grandchildren.

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'95 Jeep Cherokee Country 4 wheel dr., auto, fully loaded, 78,500 mi., \$9000 or B.O. 732-388-4986

'94 Camaro, white w/gray int., auto, new tires, fully loaded, 1-top, exc. cond. 61K, \$10,000. 396-0572

'94 Mazda B4000 SE V6. Low mileage, custom cap, 4-wheel drive, shift on the fly, exc. truck \$8900. 382-0628

'94 GMC Jimmy, 4 wh. dr., 4 dr., black, leather int., 110K mi., great cond., \$7000. 732-501-3482

'93 Ford Escort LX Station Wagon, air, am/fm cassette, p/b, p/s, exc. cond., 93,000 mi. Asking \$3595. 732-721-8339

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'93 Mercury Capri Convertible. JOE 732-574-2343

'93 Toyota Tercel, red, auto., air, 90,000 mi., great condition, \$3900 or B.O. 732-680-0534

USED CARS & TRUCKS

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'92 Taurus Wagon, good cond., 4 new tires, needs transmission. Best Offer 732-750-1727

'92 Toyota Celica GT Convertible. JOE 732-574-2343

'92 Mazda Protege 106,000 hwy mi. 1 owner, ex. cond. auto, AM/FM, CD player, air, \$3500. 908-354-4454

'92 Ford Taurus, 4 dr., 93,000 mi., auto., asking \$4650. 908-289-7665

'92 Hyundai Scoop, loaded, rebuilt, auto trans., 90 day warranty, \$1900, call anytime 381-1268

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'90 Cadillac Coupe de Ville, 1 owner, 66,500 mi., exc. cond., \$7500 or B.O. 732-382-1988

'90 Mercury Sable, full power, good running cond., 81K, air, \$1800/B.O. 732-396-1431 or mag.

'89 Buick LeSabre, air, cruise, p/b & p/s, needs paint, runs good, \$1500 or B.O. 908-451-5307

'89 Ford Conv. Van, 87K mi., tv, VCR, clean, needs some work, \$2500. Lv. mag. 908-862-2796

'89 Lincoln Executive Towncar, silver gray, all power, 55,000 mi., good cond. 732-382-4271

'89 Pontiac GrandAm, Turbo SE, 88K mi., good cond., \$2799/B.O. 732-382-2381

'89 Lincoln Towncar, runs great. Good mechanical cond., \$1000 or B.O. 732-340-0371

'89 Convertible Saleen Mustang #667 Trophy Winner, garage kept \$16,000. 732-202-0188

'88 Taurus, automatic trans., air, cruise, loaded, good condition. \$2395. 908-499-7774

'88 Dodge Dakota, auto, w/leather cap. Excellent work truck 388-5480, 382-1844

'88 Honda Accord LX1 auto., 2 dr., 12CD disk, 141,000 mi., \$3000. 732-247-3442

'88 Jeep Wrangler with western plow, hardtop with bikini. Exc. cond., \$6500. 732-969-1347

'88 Ford Bronco Eddie Bauer Series \$7900 or B.O. 732-541-9275

'88 Ford Thunderbird LX, 2 dr., V8, auto, air, \$750. 732-742-8375

'87 Mazda RX7, 79K mi., 5-spd, new clutch, \$1450. 732-382-4730

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'86 Chevy Conversion Van, all the toys, excellent condition, \$3750. 732-340-0435

'86 Pontiac 6000, 77K orig. mi., air, am/fm radio, cassette, heater, \$1500. 908-488-0388

'86 Olds Cutlass Supreme Brougham, 2 dr., original owner, 59,000 mi., asking \$1,500. 732-225-0337

'84 S10 Blazer, good condition, \$1800 or Best Offer 732-750-4448

'84 Buick Regal, good condition, black, 76,800 mi., original owner, \$2000. Call RON 732-436-5654

'83 Olds Toronado, good body, many new parts, \$450 or Best Offer 732-574-8914

'83 Chev. Malibu classic wagon, blue, runs great, 6 cyl. 3.8, dependable, \$1175. 908-686-3735

'83 Chrysler LeBaron, low mileage, running good 732-381-1647

'82 Buick Century, 1 owner, rebuilt, 75,000 mi. \$1295. 388-7404

'77 Buick Regal. Just had new brakes & front end work. Strong motor. Asking \$300. Make offer. Call 5-9pm, leave msg. 732-988-8258

'72 Cadillac. Mint. No work needed. Get in and go. New tires. \$4300. 732-636-2932

'67 Pontiac Bonneville, 4-dr., exc. condition, many new parts, \$5000 or best offer 732-381-7388

'67 Chevy Impala, low mileage, needs body work, \$1000. After 5pm 732-381-6642

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Local Cleaner Participates In Clothing Drive

AVENEL—Comcast of New Jersey, in conjunction with the Tri-County Chapter of the American Red Cross, is participating in a month-long career clothing drive called Career Closet, aimed at providing interview-ready clothing for graduates of the Red Cross Job Search/Job Readiness program. Generous Comcast employees have sifted through their closets in anticipation of this clothing drive and donations have begun pouring into the Red Cross during the month of March, which is also Red Cross Month across the country.

Graduates of the month long Job Search/Job Readiness program will be the recipients of the Comcast clothing donations. "Our program is designed to help welfare recipients with interviewing skills, resume writing tips and basic job training," said Maureen Kuhn, director of Fund Development for the Tri-County Chapter of the American Red Cross. "Many of these would-be employees are ready to take that first step out of welfare and into the workforce, however, most lack the professional clothing necessary to secure a job. We depend on outside donations to keep the Career Closet going and we applaud Comcast for recognizing our needs."

Local business owner Frank Introcaso of Introcaso

Cleaners of Avenel has donated his services to dry clean the clothing before Comcast delivers them to the Red Cross.

"This program exemplifies the generous spirit of our employees," said Buck Dopp, area vice president and general manager of Comcast's Northern New Jersey cable system. "We always try to give back to the communities in which we serve and working with the Tri-County Chapter allows us the opportunity to assist our communities in Middlesex, Somerset and Union counties."

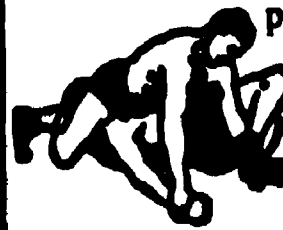
Comcast of New Jersey serves more than 275,000 customers in 42 municipalities.

7/8 Bearcats Top North Edison

FORDS—Despite forfeiting in five weight classes, the Fords Bearcat 7/8 grade team still had enough firepower to beat a rugged North Edison Mat Hawks squad 46-42 at Fords.

The undefeated Cats used pin power to make up the gap. Co-Captain Brett Epps (105) took fast pin honors with a 20 second fall and Ross Santana (125) registered his in :55. Anthony Faiello (95) and Matt Hart (70) scored their pins in the second and third periods respectively.

Kacy Epps (75) earned a major decision and Chris Christie (85) and Craig Batista (90) added decisions to complete the scoring.



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Hundreds of patterns. Installation available. Sold separately.

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35 Hayward Avenue, Carteret, NJ 07008, (888) 265-2536. Take the NJ Turnpike to Exit 12. After you pay the toll, proceed to the light. Make a left hand turn onto Roosevelt Avenue. Go approximately 3 blocks and at the Burger King, make a left onto Grant Avenue. Go one block and make a left onto Hayward. We are the last building on the left hand side. Store Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10am to 6pm Tuesday and Thursday, 10am to 8pm Saturday, 10am to 5pm Closed Sunday

"We Love Children" Fair

PERTH AMBOY — The Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc., will host a fair on Saturday, March 24 from 12-5 p.m. (rain date, March 31) at 100 First Street, Perth Amboy.

The purpose of this fair will be to promote Pre-School Education and to enroll 2-5 year-old children to Pre-School Programs.

We will have the participa-

tion of the Perth Amboy First Aid Squad, Fire Department, Path Mark Stores, Recreation Department, Arco Communication, Allan the Clown, Hispanic Directors Association of N.J., etc. We will provide games, prizes, hot dogs, refreshments and much more.

For more information or directions, contact Dr. Alberto Garcia or Catalina Garcia at (732) 442-1081.

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