

# Union County

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WORRLAND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2001 - SECTION B

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## Not enough inventory

One of the upscale realtors on Springfield Avenue in Summit has among their listings a home in the community selling for \$1,055,000. Or, you can rent the same house for a mere \$5,250 a month. The cozy office with a chandelier and friendly couch knows how to welcome potential purchasers.

In this tough market, where adequate housing is a daunting challenge for many residents, there will always be a market for those with cash. Down the road, on Summit Avenue near Bank Street, another realtor, also with a chandelier, warns, "Don't let a good opportunity pass you by."

## Left Out

By Frank Capece

Opportunity is something lacking in the very expensive and tight housing market. Clark attorney Tony Inunzio is something of an expert in the world of real estate lawyers. Asked about the state of housing last week, he said, "The consensus is that it is still a seller's market. There are plenty of buyers, but not enough inventory."

While the equity in your house is rising at a level to give you a warm fuzzy feeling, the danger of inadequate shelter is a problem for far too many people in the state.

The mortgage lenders recommend the limit of 30 percent of total family income on housing. But the recent Census data shows that as much as 20 percent of our fellow residents in New Jersey pay as much as half of their income just on shelter.

For the first time in a long time, the Mount Laurel law, to moderate-income housing may be an issue in this year's election for governor. My own observation is that the moderate housing has taken the form of one- and two-bedroom housing. But as I look to communities like Union, Berkeley Heights and New Providence, it strikes me that the housing has been a subsidy for up-and-coming yuppies.

But it is difficult to make light about this problem. Despite the desperate position of families, the Legislature has shown little inclination to focus on a solution. One bill by the speaker of the assembly would provide tax credits to investors in low- and moderate-income housing developments which can be used as a credit against other business taxes.

Housing experts also point to a unique program called UHOP. Unlike HOP, this program isn't selling like hotcakes. But if enacted, it would substantially increase the program for the rehabilitation of abandoned housing.

The market factors are, to say the least, troubling. New Jersey's current average of \$878 a month for apartment rentals actually leads the nation based on the Census numbers. Of course, the number of apartments in Union County at that low number are very rare. But the

See EXTRA, Page B2

# Freeholders approve transfer station again

## Hundreds pack Linden City Hall for special meeting

By Steve Wright  
Staff Writer

Despite passionate and sometimes heated comments from nearly 30 citizens and elected officials from two counties, the Board of Chosen Freeholders on Monday night approved, for the second time, the location of a garbage transfer station at Tremley Point in Linden.

By an 8-0 vote with one member absent, the freeholders approved an amendment to the county's solid waste management plan that permits Browning Ferris Industries to proceed with its proposal to construct a barge-rail transfer station at Tremley Point to handle 10,000 tons per day of New York City household waste.

This was the second public hearing and the second vote which the freeholders had held on the BFI proposal.

On Nov. 30, the freeholders approved the original plan 7-0, with

then-Vice Chairman Alexander Mirabella and Freeholder Deborah Scanlon absent. On Nov. 8, the Union County Utilities Authority Board of Commissioners had recommended the plan to the freeholders by a vote of 5-1-1. The lone dissenting vote from the UCUA came from the lone Republican, Walter Edmonds of New Providence, while Commissioner Charles Crane, the 6th Ward councilman in Linden, abstained because of a conflict of interest since Linden sends its trash to the UCUA.

A new hearing for the transfer station to be included in the county's solid waste management was needed following Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Robert Shim's more information about the plan including the daily processing and transport of waste and its effect on traffic and other factors, as well as

contingency plans should the facility not be able to process trash coming from New York City.

BFI is seeking a permit for the transfer station to process 10,000 tons, or 20 million pounds, of trash per day at the 32-acre site owned by Tremley Marine Terminals. Owners of the site include Linden Mayor John Gregorio's son-in-law, Dominick Pucillo; Paul Weiser, a law partner of State Sen. Raymond Lesniak, D-Union; and the wife of a man who has been barred from waste management in New York State because of price fixing, among others.

The state Attorney General's Office has subpoenaed Linden officials for a state grand jury investigating the transfer station agreement and has subpoenaed documents from within the mayor's office. Union County also faced litigation over the facility from several Middlesex County

communities opposed to the plan because the rail cars would pass through their towns.

The City of Linden would receive host community fees of \$1.2 million to as much as \$2.5 million under a 20-year contract with BFI. The firm also would take care of Linden's garbage collection and costs associated with the city's 25-year contract with the UCUA to dispose of its trash.

The hearing on Monday night in the Linden City Hall presented little new information on the proposed transfer station but it did provide both supporters and opponents of the plan to once again present their arguments. About 150 spectators packed the small second-floor hearing room and nearly 35 of them, all but a small handful of them opposed to the project, took the opportunity to directly address the freeholders.

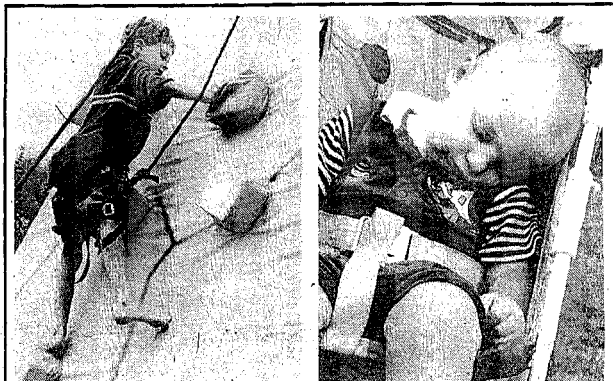
The meeting was opened by a lengthy presentation by David Iverson, project manager for BFI, who

called two specialists to speak in support of the transfer station. During his talk, Iverson voiced the main points of controversy surrounding the Tremley Point proposal. These points later would be either championed or decried by subsequent speakers.

The transfer station, said Iverson and his specialists, would remove 1,000 tractor-trailers from New Jersey roads and thus greatly reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, highway accidents and the possibility of an overturned truck spilling trash. Instead, the trash would be placed on sealed train cars conveyed "safely, swiftly and transparently" through the state. Extensive contingency plans were in place to prevent any problems from becoming unmanageable and the trains would cause minimal blockage of at-grade crossings.

"They would be just one more train among the many trains currently on the tracks," he said.

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Photos By Barbara Kukulita

**CLIMBING AND SLEEPING** — James Horner, 8, a third-grader at Brayton School in Summit, left, tries his hand at the rock-climbing wall, one of the activities during the county's Kids Kingdom at The Loop playground in the Watchung Reservation on Sunday. The events were too much to handle for 1-year-old Luke Sylvester of Mountainside, right, who decided to catch a quick nap.

## Contract renewed for grant writers

By Mark Hrywna  
Regional Editor

The Board of Chosen Freeholders last month renewed a contract with The Bruno Group of Clifton for \$85,000 from July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002 to work with the county to secure grant funding.

During the last contract period, from July 2000 to June 2001, the firm secured \$17 million in grants for the county while almost \$5 million in applications are still pending review. There are six grant applications, including more than \$5 million that are still pending for the most recent contract period.

Director of Economic Development and Deputy County Manager George DeVany said the firm has helped the county immensely over the four years it has been contracted. The county has not looked elsewhere for another firm, he said, although the county was able to negotiate a slightly lower fee this year.

Last year, The Bruno Group received a \$90,000 contract. The firm procured grants in excess of \$5 million in 20 applications during its previous contract period, from 1999 to 2000, and \$2.8 million in 22 applications during the contract before that.

Among the grants accepted this year was \$200,000 for the Night Watch Partnership, one of six grants awarded nationwide. The grant seeks to expand youth and family development activities for Project Save A Life Today, which is coordinated through the Prosecutor's Office and the Union County Probation Office.

The Bruno Group also developed the county's State Incentive Program strategy, an initiative to create more "community-based alternatives for juvenile delinquent offenders." A proposal was submitted to the New Jersey Legislature.

See GRANT, Page B2

## Survivors recall terror of atomic bombings

By Michelle Runge  
Staff Writer

Shigeyuki Yama, 71, was only a schoolboy when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, but his recollection of "a kind of hell" reverberate in his memory.

On Friday night at St. George's Serbian Orthodox Church in Elizabethtown, Yama recalled how the city he lived in was reduced to ashes at 7:15 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Aug. 9, 1945 by the world's first atomic bomb. It was already the next morning, 8:15 a.m., Aug. 6, in Japan.

"I came back from summer holiday to devastation everywhere. We did not live in the city but I attended Hiroshima Military Preparatory School, located about seven-tenths of a mile from the epicenter and my school was gone, my classmates dead," Yama said through a translator. "I am here today so the world does not forget what happened 56 years ago."

Yama said he still suffers from the effects of radiation poisoning, a lingering sickness that will be with him until he dies. He said he considers himself fortunate to be able to use

his personal history to convince others of the necessity for nuclear disarmament and call for world peace.

Japanese survivors of nuclear bombing, known as Hibakusha, have been coming to Union County for the last 13 years, sharing their graphic depictions of what life was like after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in an effort to stem the tide of nuclear proliferation.

Approximately 140,000 people died in the conflagration at Hiroshima when the Enola Gay dropped a lethal load of atom bombs. Another B-29, called Book's Car, killed an estimated 70,000 more people in the second bombing three days later in Nagasaki.

The two bombings marked the effective end of World War II. Japan surrendered within two weeks, on Aug. 15, 1945.

Yama was joined by fellow survivor Hideo Tose, 59, who shared his story of pain, watching his grandmother die instantly in the fiery inferno that ravaged the city following the attack on Nagasaki.

"Although I was only 3 years old, I can remember the flames, the way the smoke filled our home and flying glass everywhere,"

Tose said quietly. "Ten years later when my sister died from leukemia as a result of the bomb, shards of glass were still being extruded from her skin."

The arrival of the Hibakusha, always around the anniversary of the bombings, signal the efforts extended by the Hiroshima Day Remembrance Committee, co-chaired by Sylvia Zisman, a Springfield resident. An accompanying photo montage of atomic atrocities currently is on display at the Summit Public Library, she said.

Zisman is an advocate for nuclear disarmament, a resolute proponent of peace who proposes that all sources of depleted uranium be done away with safely, bombing in Vieques cease, and the United States begin to make reparations for the destruction of the ecosystem left in war-torn Bosnia and Kosovo, among other issues.

"By learning first hand about the hideous scenario of brutality, the suffering that an atomic bomb can inflict on a population, we hope our own government realizes the necessity of abolishing all nuclear weapons," Zisman said. "It is urgent that our election campaign turn into a forum on nuclear issues."



Photo By Barbara Kukulita

Shigeyuki Yama, a survivor of Hiroshima, and Hideo Tose, a survivor of Nagasaki, hold photographs depicting the aftermath of the atomic bombings in Japan during World War II.

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## Grant writers get contract renewed

(Continued from Page B1)  
Justice Commission for an estimated \$1.5 million over two years.

The six grants totalling nearly \$5 million still pending include:

- \$400,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development seeks to institute a Union County Project Youthbuild, a "comprehensive and collaborative approach to afford high-risk, low-income youth with the tools and skills for career-oriented employment in the construction and building trades." The project would involve the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools, the Elizabeth Housing Authority and Project SALT.

- A \$455,000 grant application from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention would fund more advanced technology, equipment, and training for the High Tech Crimes Task Force in the Prosecutor's Office. Another U.S. Department of Justice grant for \$300,000 would develop a proposal for a strategy to

prevent and reduce drugs in SALT's target areas and "build and strengthen the SALT Coalition."

- \$1.5 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would coordinate Union County's Project "Housing Success," a program to move homeless people into permanent housing.

- \$1.2 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services would strive for government to provide prevention and treatment services to meet mental health needs of communities. The Bruno Group prepared an application to implement an intensive case management system for adult offenders with mental illness.

- \$1.5 million from the U.S. Department of Labor would expand employment and training services, aftercare, and case management services for juvenile offenders.

Two grant applications were filed but not funded. For the City of Elizabeth, at the request of the county,

The Bruno Group constructed the four-part Operation Weed and Seed strategy for two target neighborhoods. Although the application, submitted in November, was not selected in this round of grants, the city has been invited to apply again this fall. The other was a \$50,000 grant for a community audit program from the U.S. Department of Labor. The program would "facilitate a 'community audit' planning model to develop comprehensive and occupational skills analysis."

The firm currently is working on two grants, one for workforce integration for people with disabilities, and another from the U.S. Department of Justice for implementing and enhancing community prosecution strategies. The Bruno Group is assisting the county in facilitating the workforce investment strategy for disabled people and seeking resources for it. The Department of Justice application asks for \$150,000 to expand community prosecution strategies of the Prosecutor's Office.

## COUNTY NEWS

### Meetings rescheduled

Tonight's agenda meeting and the Aug. 23 regular meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders have been rescheduled. The board's agenda meeting will be Tuesday and the regular meeting will be Aug. 28. Both meetings will begin at 7 p.m. in the sixth-floor meeting room of the Administration Building, Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth.

### Contact 5K run

Contact We Care, the 24-hour telephone crisis hotline based in Union County and serving individuals throughout Union, Somerset, Middlesex, Morris and Essex counties, has received a thumbs up from Children's Specialized Hospital, the exclusive sponsor of Contact's Kids Sprint fund-raiser on Saturday at LaGrande Park in Fanwood. The Kids Sprint, along with the agency's sixth annual 5K Road Race, will draw more than 500 people for the 5:45 p.m. event in the park.

"Runners of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate," said Joan Bonner, chairwoman of the event. Fees for the Kids Sprint are \$7. Registration for the 5K is \$15 through August. After that date the entry fee is \$18.

The Kids Sprint, anywhere from 25 to 440 yards, depending upon age, will begin at 6:45 p.m. Children, ages 2 through 12, can participate and will

receive a T-shirt and lots other fun goodies.

Contact's 5K Road Race includes a USATF-certified course, two water stops, digital clocks at mile one and two, countless individual and team awards, custom T-shirts, food, drinks, random prize drawings and entertainment.

"This exciting community event is a great way to have fun, get some exercise, and support Contact We Care's crucial service to the community," said Bonner.

Since 1975, Contact telephone volunteers have handled more than 1,000 calls a month from individuals who are lonely, depressed or in crisis. Contact volunteers are highly trained to actively listen and deal with a broad range of human needs. The hotline number is 908-232-2880.

For information on Contact's annual 5K Road Race and Kids Sprint, call 732-381-0318 or check the web site, www.OYMP.net.

### Blood drives scheduled

The Blood Center of New Jersey will conduct the following blood drives:

- Monday, 3 to 7 p.m., Union Hospital, 1000 Galloping Hill Road, Union.
- Aug. 24, 3 to 7 p.m., Union Hospital, 1000 Galloping Hill Road, Union.
- Aug. 25, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Immaculate Conception Church, 425 Union

Ava., Elizabeth, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Ave., Cranford.

For more information, call 800-BLOOD-NJ.

### Senior outreach services

The Union County Division on Aging in the Department of Human Services has announced its schedule for the month of August for its outreach services and nutrition program for senior citizens:

- Tuesday: Nora Gardens, 1175 Burnett Ave., Union, 10 a.m. to noon.
- Aug. 28: Gill Apartments, 40 Meeker Ave., Cranford, 10 a.m. to noon.

The division is continuing its effort to improve the diets of senior citizens in Union County by hosting a farmers market and providing vouchers for fruit and vegetables in conjunction with its regular program of assistance with applications for vital services.

For more information on the Outreach Services Program and other programs offered by the Division on Aging, call the division's toll-free number at 888-280-8226.

Union County residents aged 60 and older who attend an outreach event can receive vouchers worth \$20 that are redeemable for their choice of fresh New Jersey fruits and vegetables at the farmers market or at other authorized produce markets in the county.

## Tremley Point trash facility approved

(Continued from Page B1)

The comments of Iverson and his specialists were occasionally met with snickers and catcalls from the spectators, the overwhelming majority of whom were in apparent opposition to the transfer station.

Speaking against the proposal were numerous officials from out-of-county municipalities who felt their communities would be adversely impacted by the Tremley Point facility.

Ed O'Brien, mayor of the Borough of Metuchen, said the facility violated the "health, safety and welfare" of his constituents and that even if the station operated with 99.99 percent efficiency, as BFI has said, that 0.01 percent of error would mean a potential 2.4 million pounds of trash being lost each year into New Jersey waters and

eventually fouling its beaches.

O'Brien also doubted that shipping the trash by rail would remove 1,000 trucks per day from state roads, suggesting that those trucks would still be on the roads, just hauling different loads.

Sgt. Dennis Gorman of the Woodbridge Police Department, one of many officials from that city to speak against the proposal, said the mangle trash trains would isolate a portion of his city from access by emergency vehicles for perhaps seven minutes. This fear was reinforced by Kevin Wertz, council president of Woodbridge and a fire inspector, who said he doubted the freeholders would support the trash trains if they lived in one of those cut-off neighborhoods.

Speaking in favor of the transfer station were both spokespersons for

the Union County Chamber of Commerce and the local AFL-CIO.

The freeholders, shortly after midnight, voted 8-0 with vacationing Vice Chairman Lewis Mingo Jr. absent to approve the amendment.

"I truly believe the safest way to transport garbage is by rail," said Freeholder Deborah Scanlon before the vote, adding that concerns over blocked emergency vehicles were overstated. "I don't think that is insurmountable."

Freeholder Linda Stender, noting that the board was only considering the impact of the transfer station on Union County, said BFI now has to secure an additional 40 permits which address many of the concerns expressed at the public hearing. "I will happily differ to their jurisdiction in these matters," she said.

## Extra inventory can bring new popularity

(Continued from Page B1)

same Census reports show some 14,000 houses in the state already worth more than \$1 million.

This idea of a portion having wonderful housing and another sector of

the population desperately struggling for shelter is not a good picture. Legislators who come up with a plan to help citizens find affordable housing could find themselves very popular.

Finding extra inventory usually

does bring about a surge of new popularity.

A resident of Cranford, Frank Capece is an attorney.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



'Y' campers Alan Beyderman of Watchung, left, and Aaron Rubin of Elizabeth go over their script in preparation for the two theater events to be presented by the camps at the YM-WYHA of Union County.

## 'Y' campers get a taste of the theater

By Bea Smith  
Staff Writer

A new dimension has been added to summer camps for children. That is, a new dimension at the YM-YWHA on Green Lane in Union — theater.

More than 150 youngsters will be participating in two different shows to be staged at the "Y," one tonight at 7:30, called "The History of Rock Through the Ages," and the other, "Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" Monday at 7:30 p.m. Both will be held in Gering Hall Theater at the "Y."

Camp and program director Jani Kovacs-Jones explained that "the children are all delighted in being able to perform in a live theater. They are all so very thrilled by the whole concept." Kovacs-Jones, who will be in charge of "The History of Rock Through the Ages," said that the program was made possible by "a grant I got from the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs."

Ether Schwarz, music and dance instructor for Camp Chaverim — who has added the titles of writer, director and musician — has taken on all of those responsibilities with "Willie Wonka," and the mentioned that "the entire camp is involved, from first grade to sixth grade — 150 children. The main cast includes two Charlies, Amittai Natfali and Baruch Lewinson; Uncle Joe, played by Avi Shiffman; two Willie Wonkas, Jason Hocherman and Aaron Javitt and Mrs. Bucket played by Ilona Grudnikov. There are 45 speaking parts, 15 dancers, 40 singers, eight stage hands and 17 counselors. All the children will sing, of course. And the 15 dancers will do the Oompaloompa dance."

"Actually," Schwarz admitted, "I rewrote the show so that all the children could be involved. We took it from excerpts of the video and from Roald Dahl's playlet. We improvised and worked the script over. We depicted some of the highlights of the show, and there are interesting interactions highlighted."

How did the idea of "Willie Wonka" come up?  
"The staff counselors," she said, "came up with a few ideas, and we all finally settled on this play with lyrics and music by Leslie Briscusse and Anthony Newley. Our camp counselors' ages are 16 and up; some are college students. I did the legwork on it, got most of my information from the Internet, and we had the art department creating the background for the candy factory. We had a dress rehearsal for the seniors last Monday morning."

Schwarz told of "children dancing and singing 'Cheer Up, Charlie,' and the children are having a good time with it. Some will sing 'The Candy Man,' and the whole school will sing the 'Oompaloompa' song. We have about 100 children in the camp and all will be singing. And some are really small children. We try to give every child who wants a part in the show — a part in the show." She laughed. "That's why we have two Wonkas."

"We plan to give every child a Wonka Bar, which is a bar of chocolate with a Wonka Bar carved on it."

"The History of Rock Through the Ages" will have "three directors," said Kovacs-Jones. "They are Jenny Jones, Debbie Lipkin and Laura Walsh. It will be a musical revival of music back in the 1930s and going up to the present time. The campers involved will be from Camp Kinneret and Camp Y-20-Cu. And the musical program will include 'Sentimental Journey,' Elvis music from the 1950s; the Age of Aquarius from the 1960s, disco music from the 1970s; 'Material Girl' from the 1980s, and so on. The camp art will be under the direction of Stacy Lederman."

"We will have a regular curtain," explained Kovacs-Jones, "a sound system, scenery, and so on. The program, which is one of many camp programs offered to the community, took a lot of work. But the children love it. They just love being on the stage. And we have access to a real stage. Isn't it wonderful to be able to see the smiling, happy faces on 150 children all at the same time?" Isn't theater wonderful?

## Services bring theater experience to handicapped

By Bea Smith  
Staff Writer

No one should ever be deprived of a theatrical experience, and that includes a person with a physical disability.

The Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn recognized this fact a long time ago and was instrumental in offering a variety of access services "so everyone can enjoy the productions with dignity and independence."

Among the Paper Mill programs for the handicapped are sign-interpreted performances; open-captioned performances; audio-described performances; sensory seminars; integrated wheelchair seating; Braille, large-print, advance script service for the hearing impaired; barrier-free access theater-wide, and accessible parking and drop-off locations.

Michael Mooney, manager of Outreach and Access, offered some valuable information on the Paper Mill's sign-interpreted performances, which "are offered for two performances of each musical and one performance of each play. Upon request," he indicated, "children's theater performances and special events also can be sign-interpreted. With the assistance of an advisory board composed of both deaf and hearing members, Paper Mill hires the best theatrical interpreters for these performances, and discount tickets are available to patrons benefiting from this service."

Mooney explained that "signing started in 1983 with 'Annie' at the Paper Mill. John McEwen was the director of the development and innovated these handicapped programs to the Paper Mill. Unfortunately, he left us last year. The Paper Mill has always felt that there was a need for it. Actually," he said, "the first musical theatrically interpreted professionally was, co-incidentally, 'A Chorus Line' on Broadway in the mid 1970s. And it was 'A Chorus Line' at the Paper Mill that was interpreted in 1992. And we were lucky enough to get the same interpreter that Broadway had."

The way it is done at the Paper Mill performances are staged concurrently. The signer stands on the left side of the stage, and signs for people from row A to row M, and for those people, who can't read sign language, we set side open captioning, which is available to patrons with profound hearing loss who do not fully benefit from the infra-red amplification system or American Sign Language interpreters. A large digital screen, which projects dialogue as the action occurs live on stage, is placed on the front left side of the auditorium. We usually have about 75 people per show. And there are about 500 people a year who take advantage of all of our programs. For the signing, we charge \$22 a person, and \$22 for that person's guest.



Sign interpreters, from left, Mark Morrison of West Orange, Sandy Mitchell and Jolinda Greenfield are among the dozens of professionals who are part of the Paper Mill Playhouse's AccessAbility Services.

"We are trying to get more interest in these programs," said Mooney. "The deaf community is huge, especially in the New York and New Jersey areas. Some people don't know about the services we offer, and we are traveling around the country to let the people know of the advantages open to them."

Angelo Del Rossi, executive producer and president of the Paper Mill Playhouse, has said that "at the Paper Mill Playhouse, we believe that the joy of theater and all the arts should be shared by everyone regardless of economic constraints or physical disability. The board and staff of Paper Mill are committed to ensuring that each audience member attends the theater with dignity and independence. We are proud to have our access services recognized by the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Organization on Disability, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Department of Creation as role model programs."

Mooney said that "signers for the theater have a special certification program that is needed to get hired by the Paper Mill. They have to be familiar with developing the ideas and themes and concepts and characters. They must have a theatrical background of their own, with body language to become the characters on stage. We have about 15 or 20 who are regular interpreters."

He explained that "many people are not profoundly deaf. Some can hear low notes. You know, there are all

*"We are trying to get more interest in these programs. The deaf community is huge, especially in the New York and New Jersey areas."*

— Michael Mooney,  
manager, Outreach and Access

degrees of deafness. They know this coming in. And they seem to enjoy the musicals more. There's a lot for the deaf person to look at visually on the Paper Mill stage — especially in the musicals. They're very visual. What they lack in the ear, they can see visually. Everyone enjoys musicals differently.

"And the individual interpreter can make them laugh," Mooney added. "It may not be the things the hearing audiences laugh at. Interpreters may make an expression or do something physical, and it may strike them as funny. And some are very facially expressive."

Mooney said that there are special schools and classes for the interpreters. "Juilliard offers one class. Our advisory board only hires the very best certified interpreters, and we keep them with us as long as possible. We do hire the best of the best," he exclaimed proudly.

"Signing," Mooney said, "is not like a dictionary. It's more like a translation service for a difficult language and facial expressions at their gauge. I think it's fascinating how beautifully it's done. And the rest of the audience doesn't mind it one bit. They don't care what's going on," he said, "and we strongly believe it

should be integrated into the regular shows."

The Access and Outreach Sign Interpreted performances for the 2001-02 Mainstage season includes "A Chorus Line," Oct. 7 at 7:30 p.m., and Oct. 12 at 8 p.m.; "Red Hot and Blue," Nov. 25 at 7:30 p.m., and Nov. 30 at 8 p.m.; "The Dinner Party," Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m.; "I'm Not Rappaport," March 24 at 7:30 p.m.; "The King and I," May 5 at 7:30 p.m., and May 10, at 8 p.m., and "My Fair Lady," July 7 at 7:30 p.m., and July 12 at 8 p.m.

"We were the firsts to do open captioning on a regular basis," said Mooney. "Now it's being done in England, across Europe and I think Australia is going to start it next year. And Broadway took its cue from us — to do it on a regular basis."

The Paper Mill is "reaching out to the community, and I don't see it slowing down. In fact," said Mooney, "I see more and more of these people coming to see the shows, especially the open caption. And their sight in later years, can remember the theater, and will come back again and again."

"You know," Mooney sighed, "it's not just about wheelchairs anymore. It's really taking off."

## Mystic Vision Players to hold Neil Simon auditions

Mystic Vision Players of Linden will conduct auditions for the female version of "The Odd Couple" Sept. 4 and 5 at 7 p.m. at the Linden Presbyterian Church, 1506 Orchard Terrace, at the corner of Harvard Road in Linden. This hilarious female version by Neil Simon is true to form of the

Simon style. Characters include Olive Madison, a disorganized, loud 40-year-old; Florence Unger, another 40-year-old who is an anal-retentive neat-freak; Renee, a funny, outgoing female of any age; Mickey, a policewoman of any age; Sylvia, a compulsive smoker of any age, and Vera,

who is dim-witted, but very interested in winning the game of Trivial Pursuit the girls play weekly. Vera, also, can be any age. Lastly, the script calls for two brothers of Spanish nationality. These two are very ethnic and good-natured.

The auditions will include script readings. Show dates are scheduled for Nov. 2, 3, 9 and 10 at 8 p.m. For directions or information, call 908-925-9068. "The Odd Couple" will be directed by Amy Levine.

To place a classified ad call 973-763-9411 by 3 p.m. Tuesday.

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New York CityPass represents a major savings off individual box office prices — adults \$34.00, seniors \$25.00, and youths 12 to 17 years old \$26.00 — for admission to six "must-see" attractions and cultural institutions on every visitor's list: the Empire State Building Observatory; Guggenheim Museum; American Museum of Natural History, including the Rose Center, Hayden Planetarium, Hall of the Universe and the Big Bang; Museum of Modern Art; Intrepid Sea Air Space Museum, and the Top of the World at the World Trade Center.

Unlike discount programs, the CityPass booklet contains an actual ticket for immediate entrance to six of New York's top attractions, without standing in main entrance ticket lines. The booklet includes a savings certificate at Bloomingdale's, instructions about how to use public transportation and an "insider's tip" on the best time to visit each attraction. The booklets are valid for nine days from first date of use, giving residents two weekends and a full week in between to visit all six attractions.

Tickets may be purchased at any of the CityPass attractions in New York or at city visitor centers, and are available in advance at [www.citypass.com](http://www.citypass.com). CityPass is also available through all U.S. travel agencies. Booklets may be purchased in advance and do not expire — but once used they are good for nine days, making them a great option to keep handy for visiting friends and relatives.

CityPass is available in New York and six other popular U.S. destinations. For more information and CityPass tickets — for Boston, \$28.25; Philadelphia, \$28.50; Chicago, \$33.75; Seattle, \$33.50; Hollywood, \$59, including Universal Studios; and San Francisco, \$33.75, including transportation — go to [www.citypass.com](http://www.citypass.com). For recorded telephone information, call (707) 256-0490.

## Humane Society inspires exhibit

Cows are mood-ved by rock 'n' roll, chickens flutter over classical airs and TVs, and pigs like a good belly rub.

In her professional debut — and affirming her advocacy of the Humane Society of the United States — pastel artist Karen McCormack will include educational data for adults, word games and her own post cards in her exhibit of farm animal portraits from Sept. 8 to 29 at Swab Galleries in Plainfield. Her show will coincide with National Farm Animal Awareness Week, Sept. 17 to 23.

A veterinary technician, McCormack grew up near a horse farm. She and artist-husband, Paul, and their family raise chickens and ducks. She commented, "It is amazing to see the difference in yolks of eggs from our farm compared to mass-produced."

She directed her art toward the Humane Society after reviewing materials on its web site and believing in the value of farm animals as more than products subjected to overcrowding, confinement and food additives.

The artist stated, "In my show, all animals portrayed are from farmers who let their animals move freely in barnyard and fields. None of the animals are in confined spaces. They are fed natural, organic foods. Some are ven pets, such as Nutmeg, a hare whose breeder is attempting to save this type from extinction."

McCormack's exhibit opens with a

## Classmates are being sought

Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains, Class of 1989, will hold its 10-Year-Plus Reunion Nov 23 at The Westwood in Garwood.

All classmates interested in more information and attending this reunion should contact Bob Wischusen at [bob.wischusen@thegarden.com](mailto:bob.wischusen@thegarden.com) or Sue Higgins at [psarcher@gis.net](mailto:psarcher@gis.net). Graduates can also contact the Union Catholic High School Alumni Office at (908) 889-1600 ext. 302 or send e-mail to [blieberich@unioncatholic.org](mailto:blieberich@unioncatholic.org).

A search has begun for graduates of the Class of 1982 from Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains to help form a committee to plan for the 20th reunion to take place in the fall of 2002. Send e-mail information to [ucclassof82@yahoo.com](mailto:ucclassof82@yahoo.com) or the Union Catholic High School Alumni Office, [blieberich@unioncatholic.org](mailto:blieberich@unioncatholic.org), or call (908) 889-1600, ext. 302.

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## NJCVA hosts luncheon to honor program benefactors

On July 13, the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts in Summit hosted its annual luncheon and program presentation for the Panasonic Industrial Company.

The generous sponsoring support from Panasonic makes NJCVA's award-winning "Artists With Disabilities" program possible.

Joseph Taylor, president and COO of Panasonic Industrial Company, and David Griffin, assistant

*This innovative curriculum is specifically designed to provide new avenues of expression through artistic creation — encouraging personal growth and enhancing self-esteem.*

general manager of Panasonic Industrial Company and an NJCVA board member, were in attendance representing Panasonic. And in attendance were Joan Duffey Good, executive director of NJCVA; Sally Abbott, vice president of NJCVA; Irma Ostroff, NJCVA; and Bonnie Maranz, public relations/gallery coordinator for NJCVA.

A two-hour hands-on art lesson with more than 50 students from the ARC communities followed the



At the recent luncheon celebrating the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts' Artists With Disabilities program are, from left, David Griffin, assistant general manager, Panasonic; Joseph Taylor, president/COO, Panasonic; Joan Duffey Good, executive director, NJCVA; Irma Ostroff, instructor, NJCVA; Roland Weiser, treasurer, NJCVA; Sally Abbott, vice president, NJCVA; and Betsy Smith, director of development, NJCVA.

luncheon. This was just a small sampling of this acclaimed program in action.

Since 1990, the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts has provided an arts education program serving individuals with developmental and physical disabilities. This innovative curriculum is specifically designed to provide new avenues of expression through artistic creation

— encouraging personal growth and enhancing self-esteem.

When the Art Center opened its studio doors to artists with disabilities, it was with loosely defined expectations but with a strong belief in openness, sensitivity and opportunity. Since that time, not only has the program grown, but the Art Center's community has grown as well. The program con-

tinues to bring NJCVA closer to a shared human condition, rendering the struggles and passions of these unique individuals in truly visual terms. Such experiences enrich everyone, according to an Arts Center representative.

The public is encouraged to call and/or visit the Arts Center to learn more about this innovative program.

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- Bacon Cheese Omelette w/seasoned French fries..... 5.95
- Caesar salad w/grilled chicken or canned tuna..... 7.95
- California salad w/grilled salmon..... 6.95
- Greek salad w/grilled chicken or canned tuna..... 6.95
- Chef salad w/mex. turkey, roast beef and Swiss..... 6.25
- Steak sandwich on french bread w/onions, peppers and mushrooms..... 6.95
- Rigatoni, w/sundried tomatoes & broccoli rabe in garlic wine sauce..... 6.95
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- CLAMS ON THE HALF SHELL..... 5.25
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- with Marinara Sauce..... 6.65
- COCONUT SHRIMP..... 4.25
- with Orange Sauce..... 6.65
- FRIED CALAMARI..... 4.25
- with Marinara Sauce..... 5.25
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- with Celery & Blue Cheese Sauce for Dipping

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- CHICKEN FRANCAISE..... 8.95
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- with Onions, Peppers & Marsala Wine Sauce..... 12.95
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- with Mozzarella Cheese and Marinara Sauce
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- BROILED SHRIMP SCAMPI..... 14.95
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- FRIED SEAFOOD COMBINATION..... 15.95

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# Internationally acclaimed artist to show works at NJCVA

There will be an opening reception Sept. 9 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts at 68 Elm St., Summit, showcasing "Unmarked Lives," a touring exhibition of tapestries, textiles and paperworks by artist Joanne Soroka.

At 3 p.m., the artist will be giving an illustrated talk about her work and process. This event is free and open to the public. Sign language interpreting is available, with two weeks' prior notice.

Patricia Malarcher, editor of Surface magazine, will give a talk — "The Contemporary Quilt: A Pattern Evolution" — at 3 p.m. Oct. 21. This event is also free and open to the public, and again, sign language interpreting is available with two weeks' prior notice.

Born in Montreal, Canada, Soroka currently lives and works in Edinburgh, Scotland. "Unmarked Lives" began touring in Canada and was received with great interest and critical acclaim.

In his review for the *Montreal Gazette*, critic Henry Lehmann wrote: "Woven into Joanne Soroka's tapestries and collages are her complex family roots ... For instance, 'The Thatched Roof' vividly recalls a traditional roof of the type that might have sheltered some of Soroka's forebears in Lithuania ... One of the fascinating aspects of this show

is Soroka's daring when it comes to scale, which ranges from almost microscopic to near monumental."

Soroka is the recipient of many prestigious awards, including designation as a "Selected Maker" on the British Crafts Council Index as well as a British Council Grant in 2000. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Finland and Japan.

This arts program is made possible in part by a HEART Grant — History, Education, Arts, Reaching Thousands — from the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, under Chairman Alexander Mirabella.

The exhibition will continue through Oct. 28.

Founded in 1933 by a dedicated group of local artists, NJCVA has evolved into a major regional art center. It has a full-scale art school taught by award-winning faculty. There are two interior galleries and an outdoor exhibition space/sculpture garden. NJCVA is the largest visual art center in the state. It is specifically devoted to contemporary art. Programs include Artists With Disabilities, docent tours, lectures, demonstrations, art trips, workshops and other activities. The non-profit New Jersey Center for Visual Arts is wheelchair-accessible and is funded in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



'Cromarty 1999,' a linen, wool and cotton weave by Joanne Soroka, is among the works included in 'Unmarked Lives,' on exhibit at the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts in Summit Sept. 9 through Oct. 28.

## Amish quilts to return to Westfield

Amish Country Quilts and Crafts will sponsor a quilt and craft sale Sept. 22 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Westfield Armory, 500 Railway Ave., Westfield.

The sale will feature a large selection of more than 250 quilts for twin, full, queen and king beds; more than 500 wall hangings, such as smaller quilts used like artwork on a wall; pillows, dolls, artwork, toys, furniture, rugs, books, and much more from the Amish and other craftspeople of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Amish Country Quilts and Crafts is a cottage industry. Jane Benton has been in the business 14 years ago to help quilt sales around the country.

She goes to the Lancaster County farms of her Amish friends and neighbors to collect their handmade items to take to the sales.

In the past 14 years, she has held well received sales in Rochester, White Plains, and Stony Brook, N.Y.; Annandale, Va.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Lowell, Mass.; Raleigh, N.C.; Austin, Tex.; Seattle and Spokane, Wash.; Colorado Springs, Col.; and Hayward and Roseville, Calif. This will be the third sale in Westfield.

At this time when many are being forced to leave farming, the Plain People still follow their ways of a farming life. Many of them are also

skilled craftspeople. It gives Benton great satisfaction to be able to help her Amish friends at a time when the family farm is disappearing.

There is no admission charge to get into the sale. For information, call Amish Country Quilts and Crafts at 717-786-8487.

## Mancuso to leave UCAC post

Union County Arts Center Executive Director Joseph A. Mancuso has announced that he will be leaving the arts center Aug. 31.

During his five-year tenure, the arts center has experienced significant growth in the depth and scope of programming. The annual budget for the arts center also doubled during that time. "I will greatly miss all of the extraordinary people I have come to know here in Railway especially the dedicated staff that made all of this development possible," Mancuso commented.

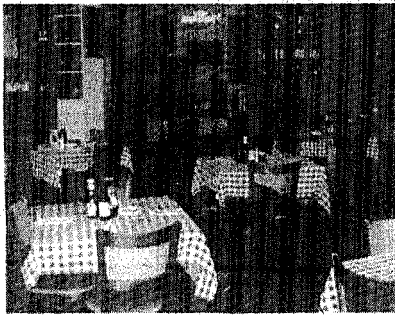
In September, Mancuso will maintain his part-time teaching position at Rutgers University and will be the coordinator of the drama program at Somerset County Vocational High School. He will oversee the program for gifted and talented high school students, holding auditions, selecting from the best students throughout the

region. "It is my intention to raise the level and visibility of the drama program to become comparable to the school's outstanding and widely respected dance program led by Sherla Buttermore," stated Mancuso. "In time, both of these programs will become models for national consideration."

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## Alexis Steak House

If you have an appetite and a craving for the biggest, juiciest steaks around, Alexis Steak House and Tavern on Route 22 in Mountainside is just the place you're looking for.

Home of the 24-ounce Delmonico and New York sirloin steaks, Alexis offers high-quality meals at very reasonable prices. The friendly service and atmosphere are also very pleasing from the attentive servers to the bright, cheery dining rooms.

Upon entering the dining room, my dining companion and I felt instantly at ease. Several well-spaced tables adorned with red-checked tablecloths offer plenty of elbow room within the large dining room, which is located several feet away from the bustling bar area. A second dining room, generally reserved for smokers, is slightly more intimate, yet offers the same bright, room atmosphere.

All dinners at Alexis begin with a complimentary bowl of pickles, cherry peppers and fresh cut health salad, which is light and cool and resembles cole slaw.

Diners are then invited to try one of the restaurant's tasty appetizers such as gooey mozzarella sticks, golden chicken fingers and tangy buffalo wings. My companion and I sampled the onion flower, which consisted of a large onion, fanned out to resemble a flower, then batter-dipped and fried to a sweet, crispy perfection. It was served with a dipping sauce that was, so tasty, I would have gladly poured it over everything I ate. I also feasted on a bowl of hearty French onion soup. The crock of sweet fresh onions came covered in bubbling mozzarella and Swiss cheeses.

For the main course, I selected Alexis' famous 24-ounce Delmonico steak, which was accompanied by a hot baked potato. The unbelievably large, juicy piece of meat was seasoned with a special blend of mild spices and then grilled to perfection. Too far into beef nirvana to think about my cholesterol level, I attempted to eat as much of the steak as possible — no easy task. But given the generous portions served at Alexis, I still had enough food to take home.

My dining companion decided to try Alexis' thick, meaty ribs, smothered in a tasty barbecue sauce, which turned out to be juicy & tender, just as ribs are supposed to be. Needless to say we both went home well satisfied and full!

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Have Dinner At Our Place & Enjoy

## Freeholders announce availability of history related grant funding

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders recently established the Union County History Grant Program, which is funded by a grant from the New Jersey State Historical Commission.

The Freeholders invite community history organizations and other non-profit groups that present history-related programming to submit proposals for funding through this History Grant Program.

The deadline for proposals is Sept. 10, 2001.

"The purpose of the grant program is to enrich the quality of life in Union County by strengthening and further developing existing history programs as well as initiating new projects," said Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella.

History programs and activities taking place between Sept. 1, 2001 and Aug. 31, 2002 are eligible for funding consideration.

This History Grant Program will enable historical societies and other history organizations to apply for General Operating Support. Other non-profit groups and schools providing history programs may apply for Special Project Support.

"We are especially excited about the opportunity to help our wonderful historical societies improve their administrative capacity and increase public accessibility to history activities," said Freeholder Mary P. Ruotolo, liaison to the Union County Cultural and Heritage Programs Advisory Board.

The Union County History Grant Program is administered by the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs in the Department of Economic Development.

To request an application and guidelines, contact the Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs at 633 Pearl St., Elizabeth 07201, or call 908-558-2450. New Jersey relay users dial 711. E-mail requests should be sent to [scoen@unioncountynj.org](mailto:scoen@unioncountynj.org).

## HEART Grants are available through county Freeholder board

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders invites local nonprofit organizations, individual artists and scholars to apply for funding from the Union County HEART — History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands — grant program.

The Board of Freeholders, recognizing the importance of culture and the arts, has renewed the HEART grant program for the fourth consecutive year. This innovative program supports projects related to history, the arts and the humanities, and demonstrates a commitment to the organizations and artists of Union County.

"The response to the HEART grant program is exciting. The recipients are a wonderful mix of visual artists, composers of orchestral music, cultural organizations and civic entities," said Freeholder Daniel Sullivan.

Mary Ruotolo, member of the freeholder board and liaison to the Union County Cultural and Heritage Programs Advisory Board, added, "The services provided by these artists and organizations directly benefit the residents of our county and increase appreciation for the arts, our history, and the humanities. These cultural assets are a vital part of community life, economic development and cultural tourism in Union County."

Applications will be accepted three times a year: March, June and October. To request a HEART grant application and guidelines, contact the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, 633 Pearl St., Elizabeth, at (908) 558-2550. Relay users dial (800) 852-7899. E-mail [scoen@unioncountynj.org](mailto:scoen@unioncountynj.org).

## Museum Guide

The Museum Guide is compiled by Worrall Community Newspapers. It is a list of museums and historical sites in Union County and the surrounding area. To add to the list, send the relevant information to Arts and Entertainment Editor Bill VanSant at Worrall Community Newspapers, 1391 Snyvesant Ave., Union, 07083.

- Little-Lord Farmhouse, Museum and Farmstead, 31 Horseshoe Road, Berkeley Heights. Open 2 to 4 p.m. the third Sunday of each month from April through December or by appointment. Call (908) 464-0961.
- Dr. William Robison Plantation Museum, 593 Madison Hill Road, Clark. Open 1 to 4 p.m. the first Sunday of each month from April through December. Call (732) 381-3081.
- Crane-Phillips House Museum, 124 Union Ave. North, Cranford. Open 2 to 4 p.m. Sundays from September through June, or by appointment. Call (908) 276-0082.
- Belcher-Ogden Mansion, 1046 E. Jersey St., Elizabeth. By appointment only. Call (908) 351-2500.
- Boxwood Hall, 1073 E. Jersey St., Elizabeth. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call (908) 648-4540.
- Woodruff House/Easton Store Museum, 111 Conant St., Hillside. Open 2 to 4 p.m. the third Sunday of each month or by appointment. Call (908) 352-9270.
- Deacon Andrew Hetfield House, Constitution Plaza, opposite the Mountside Library, Mountside. Open 1 to 3 p.m. the third Sunday of the month from March to May and September to October; closed June to August and November to February.
- Trallice Nature and Science Center, 452 New Providence Road, Mountside. Open 1 to 5 p.m. daily. Call (908) 789-3670.
- The Saltbox Museum, 1350

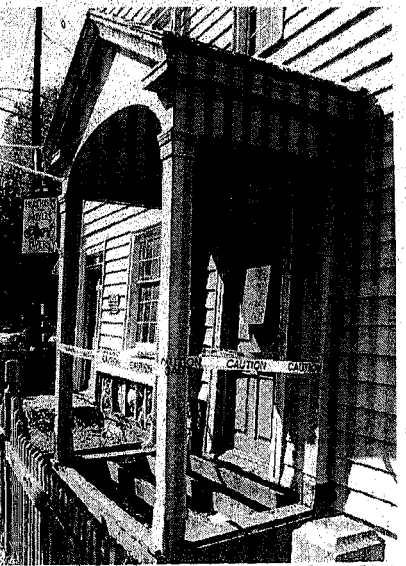


Photo by Jeff Grant

After months of restoration and fund-raising, the Merchants and Drivers Tavern in Rahway has reopened its history — and renovated — doors to the public. For information, see the listing in the Museum Guide.

- Drake House Museum, 602 W. Front St., Plainfield. Open 2 to 4 p.m. Sundays September to June. Call (908) 755-5831.
- Merchants and Drivers Tavern, 1632 St. Georges Ave., Rahway. Open Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the second and fourth Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 p.m., and Tuesdays by appointment. Currently under restoration. By appointment only. Call (732) 381-0444 or visit [www.merchantsanddrivers.org](http://www.merchantsanddrivers.org).
- Abraham Clark House, 101 W. Ninth Ave. at Chestnut Street, Roselle. By appointment only. Call (908) 486-1783.
- Roselle Park Museum, 9 W. Grant Ave. at Chestnut Street, Roselle Park. Open Mondays from 7 to 9 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call (908) 245-1776.
- Osborn Cannonball House, 1840 Front St., Scotch Plains. Open 2 to 4 p.m. the first Sunday of the month. Call (908) 233-9165.
- The Cannonball House, 126 Morris Ave., Springfield. By appointment only. Call (973) 379-2634.
- Donald B. Palmer Museum of the Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., Springfield. Open 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays. Call (973) 376-4930.
- Benjamin Carter House, 90 Butler Parkway, Summit. Open 9:30 a.m. to noon Tuesdays; 1:30 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays; 2 to 4 p.m. the first Sunday of the month; and by appointment. Call (908) 277-1747.
- Revell Reed Ashburton, 165 Hobart Ave., Summit. Grounds are open daily from dawn to dusk; office is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Call (908) 273-8787.
- Caldwell Parsonage, 909 Caldwell Ave., Union. Open 2 to 4 p.m. the third Sunday of the month or by appointment. Closed December and January. Call (908) 687-8129.
- Liberty Hall Museum, 1033 Morris Ave., Union. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays to Sundays. Call (908) 527-0400.
- Miller-Cury House Museum, 614 Mountain Ave., Westfield. Open 2 to 5 p.m. Sundays from September through June — closed during the summer — and 2 to 4 p.m. Sundays in January and February, or by appointment. Call (908) 232-1776.
- Inherited Village of Felty/Glenside Park. By appointment only during daylight hours. Call (908) 527-4911.

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Center meets demands of busy schedules

The Enrichment Center, a full-service tutoring and enrichment center, located at 424 Central Ave. in Westfield, is open 12 months a year, seven days a week to accommodate busy schedules.

The facility is air-conditioned and handicapped-accessible and has ample free on-site parking. All 85 teachers at The Enrichment Center are state-certified and experienced. Class size is limited to eight students allowing for individualization. The new fall session begins Sept. 12. New programs for 4- and 5-year-olds are being offered.

"Many 4- and 5-year-olds are only in half-day or limited programs and are bored," said Elaine Sigal, owner and director of The Enrichment Center. "Our focus is to provide lateral enrichment for these students."

Programs are offered seven days a week and are varied. Parents may choose from classes titled: Spanish, French, Botany, Pirates, Ships and Treasures, Phonics, Kindergarten Readiness, Math Mania, Space Science, Story Time Live, Mummy and Me, Junior Great Books, and Games weeks and are limited to eight students. Classes are offered during the day, after 3 p.m. and on the weekends.

Sigal also states, "Students as this age are like sponges. It is really fun for them to learn. We have a friendly, nurturing environment in which students can thrive; they love our hands-on approach to learning."

The Enrichment Center is also offering Science Birthday Parties for students in Kindergarten to 5th grade. The parties may be scheduled Saturday or Sunday afternoons at The Enrichment Center. Parents provide the food and The Enrichment Center provides the activity and the state-certified teacher. Ask what activities are available.

Call The Enrichment Center today at 908-654-0110 for a free brochure. Sigal is available to answer any questions.

**Reading is in focus**

The Enrichment Center, a full-service tutoring and enrichment center, is located at 424 Central Ave. in Westfield.

The Enrichment Center, which offers programming to students 4 years of age through grade 12, is open 12 months a year, seven days a week, and is handicapped-accessible. The modern facility is air-conditioned, handicapped-accessible and has ample free on-site parking. All 85 teachers at The Enrichment Center are state-certified and experienced. Class size is limited to eight students; private tutoring is always available. The new fall session begins Sept. 12.

The Enrichment Center focuses on educational classes and themes.

"Reading is one of the cornerstones of education," states Elaine Sigal, owner and director of The Enrichment Center. "Our programs are phonics-based and start with children as young as 4 years old. We have reading programs that run through the eighth grade and are comprehension oriented."

All children can benefit from additional reading programs, be they in need of remediation or be they gifted and in need of being challenged. Gifted students benefit from special classes by focusing on the concepts of the material, not just how to read. Remedial students work on phonics and becoming more efficient and effective readers. These are separate classes.

Call The Enrichment Center at 908-654-0110 today to request a free brochure. Sigal is available to answer any questions.

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Stepping Out is a weekly calendar designed to guide our readers to the many arts and entertainment events in the Union County area.

Stepping Out

SINGLES

INTERFAITH SINGLES, for single adults older than 45 years old, will meet every Sunday from 5 to 10:30 a.m. for discussion and continental breakfast at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm St., Westfield. Donation is \$2.

THEATER

PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE will present "A Chorus Line" Sept. 5 through Oct. 14. Tickets are \$29 to \$59.

VARIETY

THE BACK PORCH in Rahway will present Open Mike Night every Tuesday at 9 p.m. and Karaoke Every Thursday night.

CROSSROADS

CROSSROADS, 78 North Ave., Garwood presents a series of jazz, blues and comedy concerts. Every Sunday is Comedy Night at 7:30 p.m.

FLYNN'S IRISH PUB

FLYNN'S IRISH PUB and Steakhouse in Rahway will present entertainment at various times throughout August.

HILLTOP CAFE AND GRILL

HILLTOP CAFE AND GRILL in Summit presents "From Broadway to the Silver Screen" every Sunday at 6 p.m.

TAVERN IN THE PARK

TAVERN IN THE PARK in Roselle Park will present Teddy Hulek in "An Evening of Frank Sinatra" Saturdays at 9 p.m.

VAN GOGH'S EAR CAFE

VAN GOGH'S EAR CAFE, 1017 Guyvessant Ave., Union, will present a series of acoustic events. Tuesday nights are "Acoustic Tuesdays."

THE WAITING ROOM

THE WAITING ROOM, 1431 Irving St., Rahway, at the corner of Lewis Street presents Open Mike Night every Wednesday night.

THE WASHINGTON AVENUE PUB

THE WASHINGTON AVENUE PUB, 704 Washington Ave., Linden, will present karaoke and the 100-Pound Duo Band every Saturday night.

TRI-COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION

TRI-COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION will meet at the Willow Grove Presbyterian Church on Old Raritan Road in Scotch Plains. The group meets at 8 p.m. the first and third Mondays of every month.

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days and Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. NJCVCA is located at 68 Elm St., Summit. For more information, call 908-273-9121.

AUDITIONS

MYSTIC VISION PLAYERS in Linden will conduct auditions for the female version of "The Odd Couple" by Neil Simon Sept. 4 and 5 at 7 p.m. at the Linden Presbyterian Church, 1506 Orchard Terrace. The leads — Olive and Florence — should be approximately 40 years old.

BOOKS

BOOKS BY WOMEN, ABOUT WOMEN meets the first Wednesday of the month at Barnes and Noble in Springfield. Barnes and Noble is located at 240 Route 22 West, Springfield. For information, call 973-376-8544.

JEWISH BOOK LOVERS meets at 7:15 p.m. at Barnes and Noble, 240 Route 22 West, Springfield, the third Monday of each month. For information, call 973-376-8544.

SHAKESPEARE OUT LOUD Reading Group will meet at Barnes and Noble, 1180 Raritan Road, Clark, at 7:30 p.m. on the third Friday of each month to read a Shakespeare play out loud. The group is led by Kevin Muller. For information, call 732-574-1818.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN INTERESTS meets the second Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. at Barnes and Noble in Springfield. Barnes and Noble is located at 240 Route 22 West, Springfield. For information, call 973-376-8544.

CLASSES

NEW JERSEY CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTS in Summit will offer classes and workshops for adults, teens and children Sept. 10 through Nov. 30. Classes and workshops include: "Color and Harmony in Watercolor," "Watercolor Clayscapes," "Capturing Light in Watercolor," "The Art of the Portrait," "Cinqué," "People Photographing People," "Landscapes in Watercolor," "Poetry Potentiale," "Beginning/Intermediate Basketry," and "Partners in Art."

NJCVCA is located at 68 Elm St., Summit. For information, call 908-273-9121.

NEW JERSEY WORKSHOP FOR THE ARTS is currently accepting registration for its Music Studio. Lessons include instrumental, voice and music theory, with beginner through advanced classes. Additional courses include art classes for children and toddlers, the Westfield Fencing Club and the Drawing Workshop. Classes take place at 150-152 E. Broad St., Westfield. For information, call 908-789-9696.

WESTFIELD YOUNG ARTISTS' COOPERATIVE will offer professional classes in the performing arts. Beginners, intermediate and Advanced Acting classes will concentrate on improvisation, character development and scene study. Also offered are four levels of tap and three levels of musical theater, which focus on song selection and interpretation, ensemble work, voice, and musical theater movement and dance. Private lessons in voice and/or acting are available. Westfield High School is located at 728 Westfield Ave. For information, call 908-233-3200.

MUSIC FOR CHILDREN in Westfield offers various music classes to children between the ages of 10 months and 8 years old. For information on class offerings or to reserve a space at either open house, call 908-232-4881.

CONCERTS

THE TIM GILLIS BAND will appear in Rahway today at 7 p.m. as part of the Mayor's Summer Concert Series. The free concert will take place at the intersection of West Main and Irving streets, next to the Union County Arts Center. Audience members should bring lawn chairs. In the event of rain, the concert will take place inside UCAC.

MUSTANG SALLY will appear in a free concert sponsored by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Avenue end of Echo Lake Park in Westfield/Mountainside. For concert and rain information, call the 24-hour

Scotch Plains. The next meeting is Aug. 6. For information, call 908-765-7653.

FESTIVALS

24TH ANNUAL ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK FESTIVAL will be sponsored Sept. 6, 7, 8 and 9 by the St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church of Union, 721 Rahway Ave., Union. Hours are Sept. 6, 8 p.m. to midnight, Sept. 7 from 6 p.m. to midnight, Sept. 8 from noon to midnight, and Sept. 9 from noon to 6 p.m. Donation is \$1. For information, call 908-964-7957 or send funds to 908-964-6975.

SUBURBAN COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTER STREET FAIR will be sponsored

a.m. and Saturdays, Kids Writing Workshop, 10 a.m. For information, call 973-376-8544.

UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT will sponsor weekly ceramics classes for children between the ages of 7 and 12 at the Recreation Building, 1120 Commerce Ave., from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. For information call 908-964-4828.

MUSEUMS

LIBERTY HALL MUSEUM in Union offers several events throughout the summer.

Wednesdays, 2 to 4 p.m.: "Tea Served" on the glass porch, \$20 per person



Mustang Sally returns to Echo Lake Park in Mountainside Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. for a free outdoor concert of contemporary country music sponsored by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. For information, call the Department of Parks and Recreation 24-hour hot line at 908-352-8410, or see the 'Concerts' listing on this page.

hot line at 908-352-8410 after 3 p.m. the day of the concert. For other information, call 908-527-4900.

THE PARTY DOLLS will appear in a free concert sponsored by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders Aug. 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Avenue end of Echo Lake Park in Westfield/Mountainside. For concert and rain information, call the 24-hour hot line at 908-352-8410 after 3 p.m. the day of the concert. For other information, call 908-527-4900.

BARNES AND NOBLE, 240 Route 22 West, Springfield, will present musical performances throughout the summer. All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. in the case section.

For information, including a concert schedule, call 973-376-8544.

BARNES AND NOBLE, 1180 Raritan Road, Clark, will present musical performances throughout the summer. All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. in the case section.

For information, including a concert schedule, call 732-574-1818.

CRAFTS

AMISH QUILT AND CRAFT SALE will take place Sept. 22 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Westfield Armory, 500 Rahway Ave., Westfield. Admission is free.

WESTFIELD QUILTERS of Central New Jersey meet the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at Cozy Corner Creations Quilt Shop, Park Avenue in

sored Sept. 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The center is located at 570 Central Ave., Murray Hill. For information, call 908-790-0700.

KIDS' FESTIVAL AND STREET FAIR will be sponsored by the Garwood Chamber of Commerce Sept. 9 from noon to 5 p.m. on Center Street in Garwood. The rain date is Sept. 16. Crafters are being sought to participate. For information, call 908-769-0217.

FILM

UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY will present its International Film Festival through Aug. 28. Films are free and are shown at 2 and 7 p.m.

Tuesday: "Kojiki" Aug. 28: "Voyage" Union Public Library is located at 1920 Morris Ave. in Fibarberg Park. For information, call 908-851-5450.

ELIZABETH PUBLIC LIBRARY will sponsor a series of free film classics at the Main Branch. All films begin at 11 a.m. The Main Branch of the Elizabeth Public Library is located at 11 S. Broad St. For information call 908-354-6060.

KIDS

BARNES AND NOBLE, 240 Route 22 West, Springfield, will sponsor events for children Tuesdays and Thursdays, Tales for Tots Preschool Storytime, 11

Thursdays, 11 a.m., and 1 and 3 p.m.: "A Child's View of History" tours and activities for children 7 to 12 years old

Sept. 22 and 23, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: "Apple Harvest Weekend" Liberty Hall is located at 1003 Morris Ave., Union. Tours are offered Wednesdays to Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the last tour beginning at 3 p.m. Tour admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for senior citizens, \$3 for children; children younger than 6 are admitted free. For information, call 908-527-0400.

POETRY

POETRY OUT LOUD! will take place at Barnes and Noble in Springfield Friday at 8 p.m. Barnes and Noble is located at 240 Route 22 West. For information, call (973) 376-8544.

OPEN MIKE POETRY NIGHT takes place the second Sunday of every month at Barnes and Noble, 1180 Raritan Road, Clark, at 7 p.m. For information, call 732-574-1818.

RADIO

TRI-COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION will meet at the Willow Grove Presbyterian Church on Old Raritan Road in Scotch Plains. The group meets at 8 p.m. the first and third Mondays of every month. For information, call 908-241-5758.

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# REAL ESTATE

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

### Bataille cited

Elizabeth Bataille, a consistent top achiever in the Burgdorff ERA Westfield office, has been honored as Salesperson of the Month for July, with 5.5 units.

A New Jersey native, Bataille is eager to share her personal knowledge of the area with clients. As a resident of Clark, she can give firsthand information about local school districts, neighborhoods, commuting, shopping, recreation and more.

Contact Bataille at 908-518-5294. Bataille is a member of the New Jersey Association of Realtors' Million Dollar Sales Club from 1989 through 2000 and has achieved bronze level status in 1989-96 and silver in 1997-2000. She has also attained the Burgdorff ERA Awards for Leader's Circle in 1999-2000 and the Distinguished Sales Club in 1999-2000. She ranks in the top 5 percent of more than 605 Burgdorff ERA sales associates in closed units for listings, sales and production for the year 2000. Bataille is a member of the company's President's Club for the year 2000.

Judith A. Sagan, vice president and manager of Burgdorff ERA's Westfield office, said, "It's obvious that hard work and dedication to her clients' needs have resulted in high production in yet another fabulous month for Elizabeth. She is a great asset to our office."

### Feeley is honored

Ed Feeley, a consistent top achiever in the Burgdorff ERA Westfield office, has been honored as Listing Agent for the Month for July.

Feeley, a broker associate, was named to the New Jersey Association of Realtors' Million Dollar Sales Club in 1997, 1999 and 2000. He was also named to the Burgdorff ERA President's Club for \$3 million or more in closed business in 1999 and 2000. Feeley is ranked within the top 10 percent of the entire company in sales volume for 2001. This marks the 10th consecutive month that he has earned this honor.

Feeley is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Interfaith Council on the Homeless of Union County. He has served as a resident reader in area schools. He is a longtime resident of Union County and resides in Fanwood.

Judy Sagan, vice president/manager of the Westfield office, said, "Ed is an extremely knowledgeable



Elizabeth Bataille



Ed Feeley

agent in our office and has taken advantage of our cutting edge training and focus sessions to help his clients expand his own production. Mr. Feeley has a vast knowledge of the Westfield, Scotch Plains-Fanwood vicinity along with a comprehensive understanding of the area."

Contact Feeley at 908-518-3772.

### Gallego joins RE/MAX

Marta Gallego recently affiliated with RE/MAX United, serving as a sales associate. Gallego will be specializing in the listing and sales of residential properties and condominiums in various locations throughout Hudson and Union counties.

"I joined RE/MAX because this is the most professional corporation in the real estate business," said Gallego. "I can offer my clients the highest quality of service because I have access to great resources. The technology services that I need — everything from client contact software to Internet marketing and training — are available to me."

Gallego is fluent in English and Spanish, a skill that allows her to interact with and assist an extremely large segment of the consumer population.

Gallego can be contacted by calling RE/MAX United in Union at 908-851-2323.

### Fears is new CFO

Maureen Passerini, president and chief operating officer of Coldwell Banker New Jersey/Rockland County, named Nicholas Fears the new chief financial officer of the

Parsippany-based real estate company.

"Nick has 18 years of extensive experience in finance and accounting, including acquisitions, capital investment evaluation and management reporting. I know he will complement our experienced and professional finance department," Passerini said.

Fears began his career with Arthur Andersen in 1983, in the United Kingdom as a chartered accountant. He later worked in the Corporate Finance Department of Bush Boake Allen, now a part of International Flavors and Fragrances, in its London and Montvale offices. Fears also worked in the finance department of PR Newswire, a publicity distribution company.

"I am looking forward to maintaining and building on the Coldwell Banker finance department's legacy of success," Fears said.

When asked why he chose to work with Coldwell Banker, Fears said, "Coldwell Banker is a market leader with an unparalleled senior management team that promotes professionalism and a family atmosphere. I am happy to have the opportunity to contribute to this successful company."

Fears has a master's degree in business administration from Imperial College University of London, England, specializing in Corporate Strategy and Post Acquisition Integration.

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## Gaffney promoted at Coldwell

Claudine Tahan Gaffney, director of Relocation for Coldwell Banker offices throughout the New York Metro region, has been promoted to vice president of Relocation. The announcement was made by Maureen Passerini, president and chief operating officer of Coldwell Banker New Jersey/Rockland County, N.Y.

"Claudine has made a huge impact on the success of our Relocation Department," Passerini said. "Claudine is the primary reason we have been a contender for the prestigious Candant Mobility Cup, a coveted relocation industry award, for the past two years."

A professional with more than a decade of real estate experience, Gaffney is responsible for identifying and reaching out to corporations, third-party organizations and other real estate companies that are considering the process of relocation.

"I am looking forward to building on my department's success to date as vice president," Gaffney said. "We coordinate our efforts with other Coldwell Banker Departments, so that the process is completed smoothly, ensuring customer satisfaction."

Gaffney began her career with

Relocation One-Stop Realtors, where she was working in relocation and sales. Throughout her career, she has held the positions of Corporate Relocation consultant, director of Business Development, and director of Client Services.

Under Gaffney's leadership, the Relocation Department was regularly recognized for excellence by Candant Mobility, the world's largest relocation company. The department received the following awards this year at the Candant Mobility Broker Network Conference, held at the Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona:

• The Candant Mortgage Services Most Valuable Partnership Award for overall excellence in closed mortgages throughout New Jersey.

• The Candant Mobility Broker Services Gold Circle of Excellence, which recognizes the company with the highest number of outgoing referral closings generated during the calendar year.

• The Achiever's Club, which honors brokers who meet or exceed their individual closings targets.

• The Five Star Circle of Excellence Award, which recognizes brok-

ers who have met or exceeded their individual objective for outgoing broker-to-broker referral closings during the calendar year.

Gaffney actively contributes to the efforts of the following non-profit endeavors: DePaul High School of Ways Scholarship Fund, the Make a Wish Foundation annual 5K Run, and the Thanksgiving Food Drive of St. Ann's Church in West Paterson. She lives in Wayne with her husband, John.

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# AUTOMOTIVE

## Frontier reclaims its hard-body image

By Mark Maynard  
Copley News Service

With a little cosmetic surgery and a supercharged V-6, the Nissan Frontier pickup has reclaimed the hard-body image it had in the late '80s.

And we credit the truck's refreshed self-image to the style-savvy team in San Diego at Nissan Design International.

The exaggerated front end, tail-gate treatment and wheel arches scream out industrial strength. The less-exaggerated but contemporary interior styling is fully functional and fits for a couple of large males. Hoed, hip and leg room are generous at 39.3, 55.2 and 41.4 inches.

The supercharged models are the top of line and come with such desirable features as 17-inch Firestone Firehawk-GTA tires and good-

looking alloy wheels that carry the industrial-strength influence.

The interior gets baseball-stitched leather-trim seats.

The new look is a very simple refreshment. From the back, the lockable tailgate is a calling card for the truck, set off by a hefty plastic mounting plate at the latch and the jewel-toned Frontier name spread out across the bottom.

F-150 owners may not sell out to get the new Frontier, but people who were tempted to buy a 2000 Frontier, should be pleased they waited for the restyled 2001 model.

The supercharged package can be ordered in 2- or 4-wheel drive King Cab Desert Runner S/C, or 2- or 4-wheel drive Crew Cab. Prices start

at \$20,519 and go up for a King Cab S/C 4WD.

Included with the factory-installed Eaton supercharger are power windows, door locks and outside mirrors, 17-inch aluminum alloy wheels with P265/55R17 tires, body-colored fender flares, titanium-colored gauges and a 100-watt AM-FM-CD audio system.

A Supercharger Value Package — \$1,549 — adds leather seating surfaces, security system, pop-up sunroof with removable sunshade, tilt wheel, cruise control and a 6-disc in-dash CD changer.

The Desert Runner King Cab test truck — two-wheel drive on a 4WD chassis — with auto shifter had a base of \$21,569 and an as-tested price of \$23,118.

The automatic transmission refines some of the truck's fun with the manually shifted Frontier, but there's still plenty of bounce and jiggle in the ride to let you know this is a truck, not a pretender.

For those who buy into the image, that won't matter, but this rig might not be the best choice for long commutes. A little more soundproofing at the fire wall would help keep engine noise out of the cabin and a layer in the doors would subdue the tinny, hollow twang.

There's nothing hollow about the 210-hp V-6 though.

Even with the automatic shifter there is plenty of punch to spin the tires. Fuel mileage is as startling as the acceleration — 15 mpg around town and 18 on the highway, but that's only a bit worse than the non-supercharged V-6 Frontier.

Inside, the cab is nicely configured with plenty of storage slots, trays, a console and a non-locking glove box. Rear side-facing jump seats fold down for very short-term use — kids or adults — and flip out of the way for groceries and tools.

What the King Cab really needs is rear access panels, small swing-out doors that make it easier to load kids and gear. But if you need four doors, it only costs \$1,450 more the Crew Cab.

A little bit of horsepower, fat rubber, molded plastic and red-stitching go a long way to pump up the slab-sided and underpowered Frontier that debuted three years ago.

It's plastic surgery, but what the heck. This truck will sell because there's guts under the gloss.

## The story of absorbers can be shocking

By Jon Woods  
and Gary Nugent

Shock absorbers are little-understood components of your car's suspension system. If you watch all the ads on TV you would believe shocks are responsible for everything from bald tires to global warming. Read on and you will learn all the sordid details.

Let's start out by explaining the shock's real purpose. You would think that its main purpose is to absorb road shock. Wrong! Your springs and suspension are the primary devices responsible for that.

Think about it: When your tire rolls over a bump in the road the last thing you want to do is restrict the spring's ability to compress. This compression is what absorbs the impact of the bump. After the spring compresses, its natural tendency is to rebound — being — just like the spring on Grandma's wooden screen door.

I can remember sitting on Grandma's kitchen floor and pulling down on the screen door spring and the letting it go. The spring would bounce back and forth and make lots of cool noises. Well, not only did Grandma not appreciate my actions, your car would also not appreciate a similar occurrence.

Your shock absorber's job is to grab hold of that spring that was just compressed and gently let it uncoil. In other words, the shocks control the springs' rebound. Without the shocks, your car would react to this rebound by acting like an ocean liner in a large storm — I'm getting seasick just thinking about it — rocking back and forth. This uncontrolled motion would make it very difficult to handle/steer the car.

Bad shocks also do a number on tires. If a shock doesn't control spring action, the tires will not stay on the road surface, especially if the tires are out of

*Think about it: When your tire rolls over a bump in the road the last thing you want to do is restrict the spring's ability to compress. This compression is what absorbs the impact of the bump.*

balance. Centrifugal force causes an out-of-balance tire to bounce when rotating at highway speeds and the shock tries to "absorb" the spring's rebound, controlling the tire on the ground. Without the shock's control, the tire will bounce violently, causing "cupping" and uneven wear — not to mention loose dentures.

Finally, the shock does not control the riding height of your car. If you were to remove standard shock absorbers from a car, it would stand at the same height — you would notice no difference. So, don't be misled by ads that ask the question, "Is your tail dragging?" New shocks won't help.

Now, don't misunderstand me. There are shock absorbers that also integrate some type of "overload" device. These devices are typically air bags or extra springs installed on the exterior of the shock body.

So, the next time your tire dealer tells you that you need four new shocks, ask him why. If he can't show you tire wear related to shock problems or physical damage to the shock itself and you have not noticed a "soft" ride, you may want to ask him if he owns an airplane. You see, airplane payments are real expensive and shock absorbers have quite a profit margin.

## Nissan Frontier

Body style: 4-passenger, body on frame, extended-cab compact pickup with 2 rear jump seats.

Engine: 3.3-liter SOHC 1-valve V-6 engine with Roots-type Eaton supercharger; cast iron block and aluminum heads.

Horsepower: 210 at 4,800 rpm

Torque: 246 at 2,800 rpm (231 with manual transmission)

Drive system: Front engine, rear drive

Transmission: 4-speed automatic

EPA fuel-economy estimates: 15 mpg city, 18 highway (manual or automatic transmission)

Fuel tank: 19.4 gallons; regular unleaded recommended

Standard features: air conditioning, variable intermittent wipers, power windows/mirrors/locks, remote keyless entry, passenger vanity mirror, 100-watt AM-FM-CD audio system, tailgate lock, sliding rear window, engine and fuel tank skid plates, 2-tier loading and tie-down hooks

Safety features: Dual front air bags with passenger-bag cutoff switch; 3-point roof seat belts (height adjustable) with pre-tensioners and load limiters; lap belts at jump seats

Wheelbase: 116.1 inches

Height: 66.4 inches

Head/leg/shoulder room: 39.3/41.1/55.3 inches

Towing capacity: 5,000 pounds (3,500 with manual transmission)

Payload, including passengers: 1,200 pounds

Curb weight: 4,056 pounds (3,996 with manual transmission)

Ground clearance: 7.7 inches

Step-in height: 17.4 inches. Front suspension: Double wishbone with stabilizer bar

Rear suspension: Solid axle with leaf springs with stabilizer bar

Steering type: Power-assisted recirculating ball

Front: Power-assisted 10.2-inch vented discs

Brakes: Power-assisted 10.2-inch vented discs front, 10.2-inch drums rear; 4-channel 1/3-sensor ABS

Wheels and tires: 17-inch aluminum-alloy wheels and Firestone Firehawk GTA P265/55R17 mud and snow rated radials. Base: \$21,569, including \$520 destination charge

As tested: \$23,118

Options on test truck: Supercharger Value Package (\$1,549) adds leather seating surfaces, security system, pop-up sunroof with removable sunshade, tilt-wheel, cruise control and a 6-disc in-dash CD charger

## Treat your auto repairs like a physical exam

Taking your car to a repair shop is like taking a loved one to the doctor. You need to properly communicate your vehicle's symptoms to get it running smoothly and back on the road.

The AAA New Jersey Automobile Club in Florham Park offers the following tips for communicating effectively with your automotive technician to ensure faster and less costly car repairs:

- Write it down. Notes will help you remember to ask important questions and to share vital information.
- Describe symptoms precisely. Explain what you see, smell, and hear. Mention any driving conditions that

seem to relate to the problem. For example, do you notice a rattle under the hood when the car reaches 40 mph?

- Avoid technical jargon. If you use a word or phrase without understanding its meaning, you may lead the technician astray. Use technical terms only if you're sure of their meaning.

- Provide a history. Bring copies of previous repair orders or the car's maintenance log.
- Read before authorizing. Look for specifics on the repair order such as "check for hesitation as the car

warms up." If the description is vague, clarify it with the technician and ask that it be rewritten.

For a free copy of AAA's The Careful Consumer's Guide to Car Repair, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to Repair Guide, AAA Public Relations, 1 Hanover Road, Florham Park, NJ 07932.

The AAA New Jersey Automobile Club, through offices in Florham Park, Randolph, Springfield and Verona, provides automotive, travel, insurance, financial and educational services to residents of Essex, Morris and Union counties.



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# Dodge Stratus is enjoyable, not sporty

By Mark Maynard  
Copley News Service

Horsepower, sharp styling and a little more soundproofing go a long way in the freshly redesigned Dodge Stratus sedan.

The Stratus is in the mainstream of family sedans, and it comes with such a long list of standard equipment is difficult to ignore. Not that most shoppers will want to because the exterior styling is one more asset for the plus-olium.

It looks sort of like a downsized Intrepid, the next step up on the Dodge line, but even then it is different from anything else being offered.

The 4-cylinder test car has the determination of a V-6 sedan but for a sticker of \$19,010, which included the \$375 destination charge, a power driver's seat for \$380 and side air bags for \$350.

Included in the base price of

\$18,375 is a 4-speed automatic transmission, air conditioning, remote locking, power windows/locks/mirrors and carpeted floor mats.

For those who must have the 200 hp 2.7-liter V-6, it can be added for \$800.

As the dutiful grocery-getter and the basic family car, most users will be able to get along quite nicely with the 150 hp 2.4-liter 4, the same engine used in the PT Cruiser and elsewhere.

Moving up to the top line, the ES model adds a 200-hp V-6 16-inch wheels and access to a range of options not offered for the SE.

The 4-cylinder car is no slouch in features or feistiness, though.

For two days I drove around thinking the test car had the V-6 engine. The power is that noticeable and usable.

The engine has been smoothed and quieted, though it still gets a little wild

when you stomp on the accelerator for merging power. Hold tight when the engine goes for a double downshift because the torque sprays out like an elephant sneeze hurting the car forward with a slug of torque steer at the wheel.

A slight calibration of shift points might ease the abruptness of hard acceleration. The 4-speed auto shifter is an impressive freebie, but it also might need some refining. Downshifts to second gear were sometimes rough, which set off little alarm bells for future problems. A 5-speed manual may be offered next year.

Also peculiar in the test car was a rhythmic rub-scrape sound coming from the front end, perhaps a sticking brake caliper it was only audible with the driver's window open while driving slowly.

In basic form, the driving experience is enjoyable and ergonomic but

not sporty. Visibility is uncompromised for the driver, and the various switches, controls and cup holders are positioned with attention to comfort.

An argument for paying the extra \$2,600 for the Stratus ES is access gained to the optional AutoSide shifter and firmer suspension. The test car liked to go fast, but coming brought out signals of alarm from the Goodyear Eagle tires.

Noises, vibration and harshness were among the top complaints from owners of the previous generation Stratus. This time around, the engineers tried to address the noise issue with front and side glass, full wheel-well coverings to cut down road noise and foam baffling in various places in the body to further shut out tire and road harshness.

In shopping for a midsize car, 80 percent of shoppers consider safety a major consideration, for which the Stratus was given structural strengthening, 3-point belts at all seats and pretensioning for the front belts.

It also features three-threshold air bag deployment, which is computer selected depending on vehicle speed at impact and whether the seat occupant is belted.

The test car's basic gray interior was rental-car durable but lacking in back-seat storage - except for two cup holders - or a center armrest.

There's a bonanza of leg room in the back seat.

A useful standard feature is the split folding seat-back, which increases vehicle utility; it's not such a problem when visiting Home Depot or Costco to bring home ladders, brooms and shelving. It all fits a little easier.

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