

The South Orange Gaslight



The Gaslight is published 10 times a year for the residents and business community of South Orange Village.

Jan./Feb.
2005

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Village hosts summit

for local volunteer groups

All year long, South Orange is abuzz with organizational events, and not surprisingly, some of them overlap.

How can that be prevented? Well, how about a "summit" of volunteer organizations to establish a working annual calendar - one that anticipates everyone's functions.

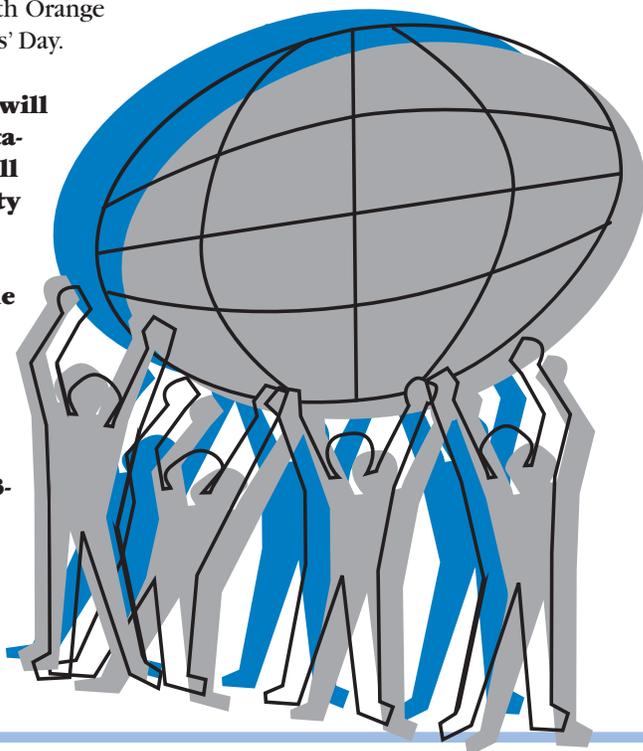
The South Orange Community Relations Committee, the ombudsman arm of Village government, will host the first such event on Sunday, Feb. 27, from 2:45 to 5 p.m. at Baird Community Center.

Group representatives can meet one another, learn about similar goals, and open dialogue to exchange contact information, speakers and other resources.

Representatives of the News-Record, the Gaslight, the South Orange Web site and the South Orange cable station will be on hand to discuss how to submit information.

For the past 20 years, the Community Relations Committee has been addressing Village needs. They created the Gaslight to improve communication, and promoted resident harmony through Village-A-Glow. Each month they recognize volunteer excellence by choosing a Villager of the Month. And to welcome new residents, they host the annual South Orange Newcomers' Day.

The CRC will mail invitations to all community organizations during the week of Jan. 24. For more information, call (973) 378-7715 x7724. ▲



S.O. drafts public information plan

Village officials have developed a draft plan to enhance public access to local government records. The plan defines available information sources, tells how it may be obtained, and lists what is restricted and why.

South Orange is the only New Jersey municipality that has developed a local public information policy, following the lead of the state's Open Public Records Act passed in July 2002.

Residents are encouraged to review the draft plan online at www.SouthOrange.org. Before the final version is adopted by the Board of Trustees, comments and suggestions will be received at a public hearing on Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. in Village Hall.

Village officials expect the plan to:

■ Educate the public on projects, programs, services and current events.

■ Enhance public opportunity for participating in policy decisions.

■ Promote communication and understanding between Village government and residents. ▲

Calling all trustee candidates

A municipal election will be held on Tuesday, May 10. Anyone interested in running for the position of Village Trustee must submit a petition to the Village Clerk's Office by 4 p.m. on Mar. 17 (the statutory deadline). Petitions and candidate packages are available in the Clerk's Office. ▲

Italian restaurateurs make smart gamble on American grille

Giacomo Ortis and Franco Delbarba didn't know one another when they came to the United States back in the mid-'80s. Ortis, from Sicily, and Delbarba from northern Italy, each worked in five-star restaurants in Europe and both dreamed of coming to America to further their careers.

Ortis ultimately made his way to Il Tulipano in Cedar Grove, where he worked as the maitre d'. Delbarba managed dining room services at The Manor in West Orange, until opening Centanni's in 1997.

The two met at Il Tulipano and ultimately became partners in Centanni's.

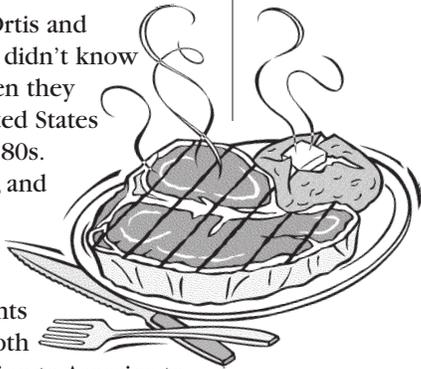
Lot 15 Grille was inspired by the partners' dining experiences in New York City - great atmospheres and unique menus, catering to lively crowds in all kinds of neighborhoods. They decided to open an American grille, everything from Kobe beef burgers, to fresh fish, chicken and prime-cut meats.

"It's a nice change from Italian," says Ortis. "We really educated ourselves on the meat industry."

Lot 15 Grille opened Nov. 25, at 19 Valley Street, the long-time address of the former Stuff Shirt and two short-lived successors.

They never hesitated in opening a second restaurant so close to Centanni's. "We had a good opportunity and we didn't want to let it go," said Ortis. So far, "We're getting good feedback."

Lot 15 offers a contemporary, casual atmosphere and mid-range prices: lunch entrees from \$7 to \$11 and dinner entrees from \$17 to \$32. The restaurant is open for dinner seven days a week and for lunch on Monday to Friday. Reservations are recommended on weekends. For information or reservations, call (973) 275-0010. ▲



CHS grad wins gold in fencing

Penn State sophomore and lifelong Villager Holly Buechel won a gold medal in the Individual Junior Women's Epee Event during the Pan/American Games in Rio De Janiero, Brazil. She was the only American competitor. Holly is currently ranked ninth in the nation by the U.S. Fencing Association in Junior Women's Epee.

In The Schools

Bloustein Scholars announced

Thirty-five

CHS seniors have been named Edward J. Bloustein Distinguished Scholars, according to the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. All placed in the top 10% of their class with minimum combined SAT scores of 1,260. Each scholar is offered an annual award of \$1,000, without regard to financial need, if they continue their education at New Jersey institutions of higher education.



AP light shines on CHS

Eighty-seven current CHS students and 2004 graduates have received Advanced Placement Scholar Awards, according to the National College Board - an increase of 36 awardees over last year. Students in the AP program take college-level courses while still in high school.

- National AP Scholars - Charles Harding, a 2004 graduate, scored 5 on four exams and 4 on six exams. (5 is highest.) Jason Kohn scored 5 on eight exams and 4 on one exam.
- AP Scholars with Distinction - 27 students qualified with cumulative exam averages of at least 3.5.
- AP Scholar with Honor - 27 qualified with cumulative exam averages of at least 3.25.
- AP Scholar - 33 students qualified by completing three or more exams with grades of 3 or higher.

Rojer honored for film

CHS senior Rebecca Rojer was among 19 semifinalists in the National Coalition Against Censorship, "Free Speech and Democracy Film Contest." Her four-minute film, "Distracted," was chosen from 107 submissions. Rebecca attended California State Summer School for the Arts-InnerSpark Summer Program in Valencia, Calif.

Chess Team checkmates

The Columbia High School Chess Team won first place for 12th and 11th grades, and second place for 10th grade in the NJ State Grade Level Championships. ▲

Snow removal reminders

Snow removal will begin in the Village when three or more inches of snow have fallen on Village streets. Public Works vehicles will make four passes on each street - two down the center and one near each curb. Depending on the volume of snow, roadways will be plowed more than once. Residents are asked to heed the following guidelines:

- Park vehicles in driveways during snowfall to allow easier street cleaning.
 - Delay driveway shoveling until after streets are cleaned (to avoid violation of township ordinance).
 - Avoid shoveling or blowing snow into the street (to prevent violation of township ordinance).
 - Tell private contractors not to pile snow in roadways.
 - Park your car to avoid protruding into the roadway or blocking the sidewalk.
 - Always shovel sidewalks within 12 hours of daylight after a snowfall.
- Important: Walkway and driveway shoveling allow emergency services to access homes in the event of a fire, illness, or public safety emergency. ▲

Sign-ups start now for fall 2005 Kinderenrichment

Names of prospective students for the 2005-2006 Kinder-enrichment program will be taken at Baird Center beginning Monday, Feb. 7. For more information, call Laurie Tyree at (973) 275-1258.

SOPAC opens new office space

Offices of the South Orange Performing Arts Center have been established at 20 Valley Street, Suite 220, in South Orange. The phone number is (973) 275-1114; fax, (973) 275-0688. A Web site and an e-mail address are in the works. For general information or volunteer opportunities, contact the office. ▲

Dreamcatcher Repertory Theatre

A professional theater in residence at Baird Center

➤ Saturday, Jan. 15 - "Multiple Personality Disorder," Dreamcatcher's improvisational comedy troupe provides unpredictable fun for the whole family at Baird Theatre. The show includes comedy sketches like those on TV's "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" Audience suggestions shape the scenes instantly created by on-stage actors. All tickets, are \$10.

➤ Saturday, Jan. 29 - "Come to the Cabaret: A Tenth Anniversary Celebration" of song, spirits and supper catered by Terra Luna at Orange Lawn Tennis Club. The fund-raising event begins with cocktails and a cabaret, then continues with dinner and dancing to a live jazz trio. Proceeds will benefit Dreamcatcher. Events run from 7 to 11 p.m. at Orange Lawn, 305 North Ridgewood Road in South Orange. Tickets start at \$125 per person. Nightclub attire is requested.

➤ Saturday, Feb. 12, 8 p.m. - "Kindred Spirits: Valentine's Day Cabaret." Tickets, \$20. Share an evening of candlelight, dessert and music with the Dreamcatcher company.

➤ Mar. 4 to 20 - "Old Friend: Melodies and Memories." Dreamcatcher company members Harry Patrick Christian and Laura Ekstrand draw from a variety of musical styles to answer life's timeless questions: What's important? What endures in our hearts year after year? A bit of pain and much laughter are found in this unique cabaret experience. Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. Standard tickets, \$25; \$18 for students and seniors.

For information on any Dreamcatcher event, call (973) 378-7754, ext. 2228, or visit www.DreamcatcherRep.org. ▲

Penny Pretzel Playhouse

A professional puppet theater in residence at Baird Center

➤ Saturday, Feb. 12, 2 p.m. - the international cast of Lisa Loum presents "One Woman Circus," amazing acts from around the world, including plate spinning, rope spinning, juggling, rolling globe, magic and mayhem!

➤ Saturday, Mar. 12, 2 p.m. - Dr. Neff's Incredible Puppet Company presents "The Rainbow Crow," a folktale of the Lenni Lenape Nation, original inhabitants of the Delaware River Valley. The story tells how the crow evolved from a mythical, rainbow-hued creature to the iridescent black bird we know today. The performance showcases spectacular mechanical-rod puppets, charming hand puppets and a computer-assisted shadow puppet sequence.

Tickets for both shows are \$8. For information, call (973) 378-7754. ▲

SETON SCENE

■ Thursday, Jan. 27, 5 p.m. - "**A History of Cartoons & The Philosophy of Laughter,**" a free lecture by renowned illustrator and cartoonist Fred McCarthy (the "Fastest Draw in the East"), at Walsh Library. McCarthy will discuss the history of American comic strips from The Yellow Kid to Zits, including favorites such as Peanuts, Popeye, Superman, Hager the Horrible, Calvin & Hobbes and more. He'll also give cartoon drawing demonstrations. Call (973) 275-2378.

■ Monday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m. - Poetry-in-the-Round presents Nobel-prize-winning chemist and published **poet, Roald Hoffmann,** at Walsh Library Gallery. Admission is free. Call (973) 761-9000, ext. 5105.

■ Feb. 11-13, and 18-20 - Theatre-in-the-Round Presents "**Macbeth.**" Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees, 2 p.m. At Bishop Dougherty University Center. Tickets are \$6; children, seniors and alumni, \$4. Call (973) 761-9098.

■ Tuesday, Feb. 22, 8 p.m. - **pianist Gilbert Kalish and cellist Joel Krosnick,** at Kozlowski Hall Auditorium. Tickets \$18; \$12 for seniors and students. Call (973) 275-2450.

■ Through May 13 - "**Voces y Visiones:** Highlights from El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection," at Walsh Library Gallery. Call (973) 275-2033.

■ **Multicultural Film & Lecture Series,** at Walsh Library. Free admittance. Each show at 6:30 p.m. Call (973) 275-2792.

- Feb. 9 - "The Tallest Tree in Our Forest"
- Feb. 15 - "Life and Debt"
- Feb. 16 - "The Battle of Algiers"
- Feb. 23 - "Fighting Back"
- Mar. 9 - "Trembling Before G-d" ▲



S.O. Symphony to perform Feb. 13

The South Orange Symphony Orchestra will present an all-Russian program on Sunday, Feb. 13. Included will be Rimsky-Korsakov's introduction and cortege from "Coq D'or," Ippolitov-Ivanov's "Caucasian Sketches," suite #1, and Rachmaninov's piano concerto #2.

Pianist Jennifer Chu, keyboard winner of the orchestra's 2004 artist competition, will be the featured soloist performing the Rachmaninov concerto.

The free concert begins at 3 p.m. at Sterling Hall in South Orange Middle School. For information, visit www.southorangesymphony.org or send e-mail to sosymphony@aol.com ▲

PIERRO GALLERY OF SOUTH ORANGE

BOOKED 2:

A Book Arts Roundtable

One Week of Special Events

"Open Book," An Exhibition by Roundtable Members

- Exhibit Dates: Mar. 6-13, Monday to Thursday noon to 4 p.m., Friday to Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Opening Reception, Sunday, Mar. 6, 4 to 6 p.m.
- Guest Speaker, Liz Mitchell, "Cooking The Books," Sunday, Mar. 6, 3 p.m.

Paper Boutique

- A sale of works by Roundtable members, Friday to Sunday, Mar. 11 to 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., including supplies and manuals.
- Paper and Book Demonstrations, offered by Roundtable members, will be available continuously on Friday, Mar. 11, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Family Book Arts Drop-In

A free hands-on workshop allows children and adults to create their own books. Saturday, Mar. 12, 1 to 4 p.m. with instructor Jane Hurwitz.

Four Workshops (adults only)

- "Introduction to Pop-Ups," Sundays, Feb. 20 and 27, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee, \$100. Instructor, Chuck Miley.
- "Beginning Bookbinding," Saturday, Mar. 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, Mar. 6, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fee, \$100; materials, \$15. Instructor, Maria Pisano.
- "Materials as Muse," Wednesday and Thursday, Mar. 9 and 10, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee, \$100; materials, \$15. Instructor, Joan Bess.
- "Four Books in a Case - Content and Structure," Saturday and Sunday, Mar. 12 and 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee, \$100; materials, \$15. Instructor, Robbin Ami Silverberg. ▲

On Exhibit through Mar. 3

Math, Mazes, Maps

Four artists – Roy Kinzer, Susan Happersett, Ron Ridgeway and Ken Weathersby – offer intricate, often abstract, patterns, each with a personal vision.

- Gallery Talk with Artists: Sunday, Feb. 13, 2 p.m.
- Gallery hours: Wednesday, Thursday, 10-2, 4-6; Saturday, Sunday, 1-4. ▲



Library Events

For info call (973) 762-0230

Let's Talk Oscar

The library will host its annual discussion of the Academy Award nominees on Tuesday, Feb. 22, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Allen Barra, author of "Inventing Wyatt Earp" and "That's Not the Way It Was," and a frequent writer for the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and ESPN, will present his predictions.

Black History Month: More than a Coming

Gospel singer, writer and poet Johnnie Jones Tucker will present a diverse Black History Month program on Monday, Feb. 28, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. His music, poetry, readings and storytelling will appeal to all generations.

Library Discussions

Join the discussion on Thursdays from 1 to 2 p.m.

- Jan. 27 – "The Paradox of India," with Barbara Lipton, professor of Asian art and culture at The New School.
- Feb. 3 – "The Movie Industry in New Jersey," with Ron Goldberger.
- Feb. 10 – "The Harlem Renaissance," with Gerry Smith-Wright, chairwoman of the English Department at Drew University.
- Feb. 17 – "Christopher Columbus: The Myth and the Reality," with Eugene Lieber, professor of history at Essex County College.
- Feb. 24 – "The Effect of the Election on American Life and the Place of the U.S. in the World," with Edwin Lewison and Robert Manley, professors emeritus of history at Seton Hall University.
- Mar. 3 – "Ancient Ancestors of the Southwest," with Maria Masucci, professor of anthropology at Drew University.
- Mar. 10 – "Ethics and Morality in Public Policy," with Barrie Peterson, associate director of the Institute on Work at Seton Hall University.

Special Groups

- **S. O. Book Review Group** (adults) – Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m. "Anna Karenina," by Leo Tolstoy. Mar. 7, 7:30 p.m., "Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time," by M. Haddon.
- **Star Book Group** (grades six and up) – Feb. 4, 4 p.m. "The People of Sparks," by Jeanne DuPrau, sequel to "City of Ember." Mar. 4, 4 p.m., "Sons from Afar," by Cynthia Voigt, part of the Tillerman series.
- **Open Stage Teen Poetry Reading** (9th grade and up) – Thursdays, Feb. 17 and Mar. 17, 7 p.m.
- **Creative Writing Class** with local author Holly Scalera – Feb. 15 and Mar. 15, 7:30 p.m. No experience necessary.

Library Cinema

Free movies are shown every other Wednesday at 1 p.m. Selections are subject to last minute change. Films are graciously donated by We Got Movies on Scotland Road.

- Feb. 2 – Stars and Stripes Forever
- Feb. 16 – Yankee Doodle Dandy
- Mar. 2 – Unsinkable Molly Brown ▲

S.O. filmmakers Chatmon & Konopinski raise the bar on racial depictions

Filmmaker Pete Chatmon is a 20-something black man who grew up in South Orange. "I played soccer, I had friends who were Rhodes Scholars, and . . . I knew people who went to jail. I got a wide view of the realities of people."

Then there was Australia, where Chatmon served as a student ambassador right before college. While there, "I was asked whether I ever stabbed anybody."

South Orange's storied acceptance of diversity may be a global rarity, but Chatmon, who still lives here, is driven to share his point of view through film. With partner Emily Konopinski, a Maplewood resident and fellow Columbia High graduate, Chatmon has already produced three highly acclaimed film shorts: "3D,"

"Chameleon" and "Confessions of Cool."

The two work under the company name Double 7 Film, which is headquartered in South Orange. Their shorts have featured rising stars of Hollywood, such as Kerry Washington, who played opposite Jaime Foxx in "Ray," and Dorian Missick from "Two Weeks Notice."

"The shorts are calling cards," says Chatmon. "The festival circuit is an intro to the film industry. What we've done is put a certain voice out there. We've met a lot of actors who are signing on to our ideas and we can show our shorts to somebody like Spike Lee. It's all about building a reputation."

Now Chatmon and Konopinski are raising \$500,000 for "Premium," their first feature-length film, which combines an entertaining love story with a forthright racial perspective.

"Some people will just be attracted to the love story," says Chatmon, but there's a deeper message. "The main character is a struggling black actor trying to push his career without taking stereotypical roles." Like Chatmon, "he's pursuing a career that helps to form people's opinions. He may go to some ridiculous audition that stereotypes



black people, but then you see his real life" – his relationship with his girlfriend, his gas station job – "and it's such a juxtaposition."

The idea that there is a "genre" of black film "is ridiculous," says Chatmon. "How did a whole race of people become a genre? And what is black film? It's not for you if you're not black?"

Double 7's first shorts were message-driven, "maybe kind of heavy-handed," says Chatmon. "But this film (Premium) doesn't forget that people like to be entertained." It's a love story about "the love before the love" – the early relationship that didn't work out but taught you everything.

"As we move through other films, we want to be branded as a new wave of American cinema, not given to typical depictions of black or white because that stuff has

been run into the ground. We want to show everyone in a more balanced way."

Most of Premium will be shot in South Orange and Chatmon expects that many of the extras will be Village residents. "I have a great appreciation for all the town has afforded me in terms of life experience, diversity, and support, and we are looking forward to showcasing many of those elements," he said.

Mar. 31 is the fund-raising deadline and Chatmon hopes to shoot the film in June.

Meanwhile, he continues to work full time in the production department at the NYU film school (his other alma mater) and teaches an acting class. Konopinski is a fine arts major at Montclair State University, now finishing her degree after a stint in the United States Air Force.

Double 7 to showcase student talents

To support the towns "that have given us so much," Chatmon and Konopinski are developing "a spotlight on the arts" to showcase the talented children in the South Orange/Maplewood School District. In a free production at South Orange Middle School auditorium, kids from first to twelfth grade will display their talents in choral and solo singing, drama, film production, fine art and more. Details are being finalized, but the target date is late February. ▲

Tsunami fundraiser, Jan. 30

A fund-raiser for tsunami victims in Southeast Asia will be held Sunday, Jan. 30, from 4 to 8 p.m., at Taste of Asia restaurant, 54 West South Orange Avenue.

The event is the brainchild of restaurant owner Steve Chia, a native of Malaysia, whose Pan-Asian cuisine includes Indonesian selections. Collaborating with Chia are Main Street South Orange and the South Orange Chamber of Commerce.

Ticket prices had not been determined at deadline time. For reservations, call the Main Street office at (973) 763-6899 or visit the Web site, mainstreetsouthorange.org. ▲

Farewell to Giorgio's

Giorgio's Restaurant, a landmark at 52 Vose Avenue for the past 16 years, closed permanently on Nov. 19.

Owners Janet and Joseph Giorgio are searching for a new location and hope to be re-established this year.

"We were the first fine-dining Italian restaurant in South Orange," said Janet. "We moved here from Madison Avenue," where they were located for 10 years previously.

"We want to thank all our patrons. We have a lot of good memories. It was so much fun – like family, coming home for dinner, not just a customer relationship," she said. ▲

"Premium" investment sessions offered Mar. 5

Anyone interested in investing in Double 7 Film company's forthcoming venture, "Premium," is invited to one of two information sessions offered on Mar. 5: one at Maplewood Library, noon to 2 p.m.; the other at South Orange Library, 3 to 5 p.m.

In Touch

with Village Government

General Info.
(973) 378-7715
Emergency, 911
Clerk's Office, x1
Administrator, x2
Construction, x3
Tax Collector, x4
Assessor, x5
Welfare, x5
Finance, x6
Engineer, x7
Parking Auth., x8
Health Officer
x2012
Animal Control
378-7745
Fire Dept.
378-7751
Library
762-0230
Police Dept.
378-7775
Public Works
378-7708
Recreation &
Cultural Affairs
378-7754
Recycling Info. &
Street Dept.
378-7741
Water Service
266-8869

To submit information for *The South Orange Gaslight*, send to Editor Robin Patric, c/o Village Hall

Dec. Villagers of the Month Pomper & DuBow



Rayna Pomper, a local teacher and eight-year trustee with the Montrose Park Historic

District Association, organized the group's first Family Fun Day back in October. She created art projects using multi-sensory materials, a bulb-planting beautification project, and team-building games with a physical education teacher.

MPHDA President Amy Dahn said, "I cannot say enough good things about Rayna. She is dedicated to any project she undertakes and is very humble about her work."

Helen DuBow, a human resources manager for JP Morgan-Chase, initiated a 5K run in her own Newstead neighborhood in

Village Meetings

- Board of Adjustment, Feb. 1 and Mar. 1, 7 p.m.
- Board of Health, Feb. 10 and Mar. 10, 7:30 p.m.
- Board of Trustees regular meetings, Jan. 28, 8 p.m.; conference agenda, Feb. 14 and Mar. 14, 7:30 p.m.
- Cable TV Advisory Committee, Jan. 26 and Feb. 23, 8 p.m.
- Community Relations Committee, Feb. 17 and Mar. 17, 8 p.m., at Baird Center.
- Library Board, Feb. 8 and Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m., at the library.
- Parking Authority, Feb. 15 and Mar. 15, 8 p.m.
- Planning Board, Feb. 7 and Mar. 7, 7:30 p.m.
- Rent Leveling Board, Feb. 9 and Mar. 9, 7 p.m.

All meetings are at Village Hall, unless otherwise indicated. Call (973) 378-7725. ▲



2003. Her idea was a fund-raising fitness event that would showcase the neighborhood among participating

runners from far and near. It was a huge success and proceeds were used to purchase equipment for the neighborhood playground.

In 2004, the second annual run attracted another large showing of runners and proceeds were donated to South Orange's Domestic Violence Resource Task Force, which supports victims of domestic violence.

Jan. Villagers of the Month The Giants of Jazz Committee

It was a standing-room-only crowd back in June 1998 thanks to South Orange musician John Lee who initiated a major jazz event as a fund-raiser for the Village's Arts in the Park program.

A highly respected bassist, composer, music educator and producer, Lee's lead role attracted high-octane buy-in. Sharing the stage

with him on that heady first night were Jon Faddis, Jackie McLean, Phil Woods, Slide Hampton, Don Braden, Mulgrew Miller, Geary Moore, Billy Drummond, T.S. Monk, and Ronnell Bey.

The concert has become an annual phenomenon, which the New York Times hailed in 2004 as the premier jazz festival in New Jersey, and the Star-Ledger called "one of the top jazz shows of the year, anywhere."

Giants of Jazz is produced through the Department of



John Lee

Recreation and Cultural Affairs in collaboration with Lee. Other residents on the advisory board are Diane

Michael, who works behind the scenes attending to musicians' needs; and Myra and Steve Friedman, jazz lovers who handle the event's publicity and marketing.

Stage manager Judy Kahn and Lee May contribute to the marketing, scheduling and back-stage operations.

South Orange applauds John Lee and his core committee for making our Village a major New Jersey venue for world-class jazz. ▲

Township of South Orange Village South Orange, NJ 07079



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