



SPIRIT AWARD — James Shalhoub of Chatham received the St. Peter's Prep Spirit Award at a school assembly on Nov. 21. Spirit Award winners are nominated by their peers and faculty, and selected because they model for the community the qualities and values that define a Prep student. James was one of six seniors honored for participation in volunteer work, Christian Ministry, co-curricular activities at Prep and for camaraderie with fellow students. Saint Peter's Prep is an independent, college preparatory school for boys in Jersey City. From left, school principal James DeAngelo; James and Fr. Robert Reiser, S.J., Saint Peter's Prep president.

Singing the praise of donors

To the editor:

Sunday, Nov. 4, was Pledge Day in Summit. Students from the Summit High School music program went door-to-door throughout the community of Summit for their annual fund raising drive. The response was magnificent. Members of our community gave the students overwhelming and generous support, some of which we are still receiving as contributors send in envelopes that the students left at houses where they did not find anyone at home.

In these days of tight school budgets, the funds raised on Pledge Day enable us to enrich our music program. Over the past five years we have been able to provide two new performance pianos, recording equipment for music training and audition recordings, and 12 MIDI stations where students can study and compose music using computer software. Sometimes we fund master classes, workshops and musical performances by professional musicians in our schools. For example, in October we were able to bring in the Colgate 13, an undergraduate capella group from Colgate University and in November, two concert artists from Kean University played for orchestra students and critiqued solo performances by student musicians.

We also provide need-based scholarships for music study. This letter is a heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters. Your generous contributions enable us to raise the quality of the music program in the Summit schools. We could not do it without you.

We invite you to come and hear the talented student musicians at Summit High School at any of their performances. You will find a calendar of events online at the Summit public schools website and also in a brochure available at the Summit Public Library. In particular, our "Music Marathon," scheduled for March 14, is a special thank you to our Pledge Day donors at which all of the performing groups from the high school perform in succession from 3-11 p.m. in a concert extravaganza. We hope you will come hear how your support contributes to an excellent musical result.

Anne Van Horne, president
Summit Music Parents Association

Letters to the Editor

Stop PetSmart before it's too late

To the editor:

As a resident of Millburn-Short Hills for over 21 years, I am deeply concerned where our town is headed. Most people I know moved here because of the "small town" feel, excellent schools, and close proximity to New York City. I am afraid that our town is about to change for the worse by a potential zoning variance approval for one of our stores.

Now before the Millburn Zoning Board of Adjustment is an application from PetSmart for a variance to open a "full service" pet care in the building where Whole Foods currently is located on Millburn Avenue. At the Nov. 19 meeting to a standing-room only audience of concerned residents, PetSmart officials discussed the 29,000-square-foot retail store, but downplayed the full kennel and other "value added pet services" which they "consider" ancillary. The public hearing on this variance request was scheduled to continue this past Monday night, Jan. 7.

Please do not be mislead.

PetSmart's entire corporate strategy is a "one-stop shopping" concept for dogs starting with boarding at its 24/7 PetsHotel kennel; full veterinary services; daycare; training and grooming.

PetSmart reported that revenue from these "value added" pet care services, including pet hotels and veterinarian services, increased 20.3% to \$335.4 million for the first three quarters of fiscal 2007 ending Oct. 28, 2007. The money and the growth in this business is not selling dog food, but in this personal care pet business. Since these are not ancillary businesses but critical to its core business model, the Board of Adjustment needs to reject the variance application.

PetSmart's Millburn location, I think, will be the first in a residential neighborhood and not on a highway or strip mall. While PetSmart has a smart business model to increase profits, it does not fit in our small town and residential neighborhood.

I am so concerned about PetSmart's application that I have joined the grassroots effort of township residents, which has formed Millburn United to help stop this application. Please check the website www.millburnunited.org and join us in this effort before it is too late.

Lise Chapman
Short Hills

The gift of an historic garden

To the editor:

Thanks to the Madison Garden Club, local residents will now enjoy a lush and fragrant carpet of bright blue periwinkle blossoms each spring along the white picket fence that graces Miller's Station on Ridgedale Avenue. The Garden Club's generous, earth-friendly gift of over 500 periwinkle plants will undoubtedly be appreciated by all who pass by the historic house and blacksmith forge for many years to come.

Special thanks are extended to Madison Historical Society

President Cathie Coultas and Vice President Dan Seidel for their extraordinary efforts in planting and watering the entire truckload of delicate young sprigs in a single day.

The current custodian of the Miller Family homestead is both grateful and honored to have assisted in this successful effort to help improve our local environment and further enhance the charm and beauty of Madison's Bottle Hill Historic District.

David Quirk
The Luke Miller House
Madison

Thanks for 911 response

To the editor:

I am writing to recognize the outstanding response to my wife's 9-1-1 call at 3 a.m. on Nov. 9 while we were visiting my son's family in Summit.

Both the Summit Police and the Summit Volunteer First Aid Squad responded quickly, and the police officer and three emergency squad personnel were extraordinarily professional, helpful and quick to deal with the situation and get me to the emergency room at Overlook Hospital.

Many thanks to all of them.

Charles Tagga
Wakefield, R.

Scarey experience on Halloween

To the editor:

As I remember the highlights of 2007, Halloween stands out because I had an unexpected visit from Summit's excellent Fire Department and First Aid Squad. Thanks to their fast response to my 9-1-1 call, a disaster was prevented.

My sincere appreciation goes to the brave men and women who stand by and take such good care of us, all year long.

Sabine Ho
Summit

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