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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students at Sundance School in North Plainfield are exploring the theme of "The Earth is Good to Me." As part of this program, members of the Constellation Class (students in second and third grades) are shown in costume representing various water-related themes, including pirates, sharks, clouds and a plumber.

Students of the week

Here's the latest school news from around the area

Sundance School celebrates water

The Sundance School in North Plainfield recently kicked off its annual school theme, "The Earth is Good to Me," with a colorful parade celebrating the wonders of water. Children ages 2 through third grade dressed in costumes depicting water-related themes, from mermaids to sharks to clouds and rainbows — even a sunken treasure chest.

The parade marked the culmination of a two-month, mini theme that focused on water's importance in our lives. During October, the younger children explored water-related themes through science experiments showing how water can change to ice or steam, art lessons using water colors, and by reading books such as "The Kissing Fish."

Students in kindergarten through third grade learned about underwater habitats, measured the length of various sea creatures as part of math

classes and created an underwater mural. The water theme also was woven into daily music and theater classes.

Today, the school's Con-

stellation class (second- and third-graders) will cap off their exploration of water with a full-length production of "Pirates — The Musical." The performance begins at 7 p.m. The musical also will be presented during the school's open house at 1 p.m. tomorrow. The open house will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Sundance School is at 401 Greenbrook Road, North Plainfield. For more information, call 908-561-5055.

Bridgewater

Mark Bogart graduated this summer from Tulane University, New Orleans, La., with a bachelor of arts degree from the Tulane School of Liberal Arts.

Bridgewater Raritan High School graduate student Lauren Haag was in-

ducted into the Chi Epsilon Honor Society at Ramapo College. Haag is a second-year scholarship student at the college.

Michael Harwick was named to the dean's list at Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y., for the spring semester.

William G. Raska received the Jeffrey James Harold Prize for the highest grade point average in electrical engineering during the first year at Bucknell University,

Lewisburg, Pa. Raska is a 2008 graduate of Gill St. Bernards School.

Lauren Mikorenda, a 2007 Bridgewater-Raritan High School graduate, was named to the dean's list at Drexel University, where she is a junior studying design and merchandising.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

The cast of "Pirates! The Musical," which will be presented at Sundance School in North Plainfield at 7 p.m. today and during the school's open house at 1 p.m. tomorrow.

Cast of 60 featured in SKIT production

By PAMELA SROKA-HOLZMANN
 STAFF WRITER

LEBANON TOWNSHIP — For those who want to experience live theater without the hassle of expensive prices or treks to Manhattan, the ShowKids Invitational Theatre's production of "Annie Jr." might just be the ticket.

The performance is scheduled for today, tomorrow and Sunday, Nov. 15.

The show features a cast of 60 children age 5 and older.

Based on the popular comic strip, "Annie Jr." tells the tale of a Depression-era orphan determined to find her parents, who abandoned her

ANNIE JR.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. today, 2 and 7:30 p.m. tomorrow; 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 15

WHERE: Voorhees High School auditorium, 256 Route 513, Lebanon Township

COST: \$9.50 to \$13.50. Children under 4 will not be admitted

INFORMATION: 908-638-5959 or www.showkids.org

at a New York orphanage. Annie foils the plans of orphanage director Miss Hannigan, befriends President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and finds a new family in billionaire Oliver Warbucks, his personal secretary Grace Farrell and a dog named Sandy.

The Broadway "Junior" version has been adapted for younger performers from the Broadway "Annie" production and is shorter in length, making it a family-friendly show suitable for ages 4 and older, said Carolyn Newman, the production's director and producer.

ShowKids Invitational Theatre, also known as SKIT, was founded by Newman in 1986 and started with seven children performing in her High Bridge living room. Today, the production company has 125 children.

New to this production is Ashley Eichbauer, a

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Carly Mindel of Long Valley, above, and Hayley Pellis of High Bridge, both 13, play everyone's favorite orphan.

Even with Christie's victory, Middlesex still a Democratic county

JERSEY FRESH



By Rick Malwitz

The defeat of Gov. Jon S. Corzine, in one of the bluest of blue states, has been interpreted by outsiders as a defeat for Barack Obama, and reason for Republicans nationwide to salivate at prospects in 2010.

Insiders know better.

The election was not about Obama. It was not the economy, stupid. It was about the sitting governor. Chris Christie won because Corzine lost.

The Corzine negative

draw was best illustrated in Middlesex County, a Democratic Party stronghold, where Republicans win seats on the Board of Freeholders about as often as visits from Halley's Comet.

Corzine lost the county by 7,663 votes, four years after he won by 32,000 in the county over Doug Forrester. He lost Woodbridge by 1,864 votes. He lost Edison by 817 votes.

In the days following the vote, some party officials

wondered if it was time for a change at the top of the party, as if Democratic Party county chairman Joe Spicuzzo was somehow to blame. Former Gov. Jim Florio, who spoke at a political forum at Rutgers the day after the election, suggested the county needed "new leadership."

Others rose to Spicuzzo's defense.

State Sen. Joe Vitale, D-Middlesex, said Spicuzzo was not to blame. "We won our county races," said Vi-

tale. "We did well. It is still a Democrat county."

Corzine losing Middlesex, said Vitale, "wasn't a function of the wrong kind of leadership."

"It was a difficult election, with the taxes and the economy," said Spicuzzo. "We were happy to have the candidates we had — as freeholder and the Assembly. I take that as a win. Other (Democratic) freeholders in other parts of the state didn't do as well."

Spicuzzo had suffered an earlier defeat when the party needed a replacement on the ballot in the 19th District, after South Amboy Mayor Jack O'Leary stepped down to defend himself against personal charges against him and his family. Spicuzzo's handpicked replacement was former Superior Court Judge Matthias Rodriguez, who left the bench to seek the nomination.

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