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**UPDATE:** The SPHS Class of 2021 Graduation Issue hits the newsstand on July 16. Want to pay tribute to the graduates? Call 908-668-0010 or email spobserver@comcast.net.



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# OBSERVER



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**SOUTH PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**  
See page 5.



## A Passion for Personal Service Turns Into a 60-Year-Old Family Business



(L-R) Kim Albanese, Judy Kape, Alan Kape, Rebecca Lanzano and Barbara Chin at Kape Insurance office on Hamilton Boulevard.

By Mary Ann Bourbeau

Growing up in South Plainfield, Alan Kape remembers his father, Bernard, being very much like George Bailey in the classic film, "It's a Wonderful Life."

"He started out selling life insurance and was also a realtor," said Kape. "South Plainfield was just developing into a residential area, and he helped a lot of people get their first mortgages. It was a real source of pride for him."

Today, Alan is carrying on his father's legacy, selling insurance in the same building at 510 Hamilton Boulevard where his father started the business in 1961.

"He was always trying to help people with their financial needs, selling life and real estate insurance," said Kape. "His goal was to try and help people find the right coverage and pricing for their needs, and that's what we

still do today. We expanded into small business and family type coverage and morphed into a property and casualty agency."

Kape Insurance, a Trusted Choice independent insurance agency, offers personal and business insurance through multiple providers. The agents can provide quotes on homeowners' insurance (condo, renters, secondary residence), small business and personal insurance, auto, motorcycle, boat and classic car insurance, bonds, commercial building and general liability coverage, worker's compensation, cyber and data breach insurance.

The agency recently announced its membership with the New Jersey Agents Alliance, a group of select insurance agencies throughout the state that have come together to offer expanded resources and options for their clients.

"We're affiliated with some of the best

known insurance agents in the state," said Kape. "We now have access to much larger insurance providers for larger clients."

Kape Insurance Agency provides a variety of services usually found at a bigger insurance agency, but adds the personal touch that was so important to Bernie Kape. The one-man operation has grown to support a full staff.

After earning a bachelor's degree as an insurance major at the University of Rhode Island, Alan Kape spent time in commercial sales and worked at Metropolitan Life before joining his father's firm in 1983. He took the reins as president upon Bernie's retirement. Alan's wife, Judy, serves as office manager and leads the personal insurance department.

Bernie Kape's desire to personally assist clients with their insurance needs remains the mission of Kape Insurance Agency today.

"I like talking to different people each day," said Alan. "Times have changed and people's insurance needs have gotten more complicated. They might find a better price somewhere else, but they may not realize they're buying a policy with holes and gaps. We're up on all the latest trends and beware. It feels good guiding people through that."

The main thing that sets Kape Insurance apart from other agencies is its personalized service.

"Our clients can talk to the same person every time," said Kape. "We know their situation and respond quickly with good advice."

Kape Insurance agency can be reached by calling (908) 757-6666 or emailing [info@kapeinsurance.com](mailto:info@kapeinsurance.com).

For more information, visit [www.kapeinsurance.com](http://www.kapeinsurance.com).

## Driver Killed After Being Struck by Freight Train on New Brunswick Ave.

A southbound vehicle on New Brunswick Avenue was struck by a westbound freight train at the crossing just north of Lakeview Avenue in Piscataway. The New Brunswick crossing is half in Piscataway and half in South Plainfield. The accident occurred on July 4 at approximately 2:15 p.m. The railroad crossing was closed to traffic for more than six hours.

The driver of the 2014 Lexus sedan was the sole occupant and pronounced dead at the scene. The driver was identified as Piscataway Township resident Jaswant Mody.

A preliminary investigation by the Piscataway Police Department indicated that railroad visual and audible warning devices were functioning properly at the time of the crash. No further information has been released at this time.

The Traffic and Safety Division of Piscataway Police Department is conducting the investigation. Anyone with any information about the collision should contact Ptl. Brendan Smith at (732) 653-7370.

## Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Terminating Public Health Emergency

On June 4, Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation enabling the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency that had been in place since March 9, 2020. Immediately following the signing of the legislation, Murphy signed Executive Order No. 244, ending the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Under the legislation, the majority of executive orders issued that relied on the existence of the Public Health Emergency expired as of July 4, with exceptions specified in the legislation.

Executive Order No. 192 (2020) is not specified in the legislation as continuing beyond July 4, so masking, social distancing and other health and safety protocols originally set forth will no longer be mandatory across businesses and facilities, regardless if they are open to the public or not. Though these protocols are no longer required by the state, employers and entities overseeing worksites and other facilities are permitted to craft more restrictive policies that require masking and social distancing, and which

continue the implementation of health and safety protocols.

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) order, masks are required on planes, buses, trains and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Travelers are not required to wear a mask in outdoor areas of a conveyance. Masking requirements also remain in effect in certain state-regulated settings, including child care facilities, camps, long-term care facilities, other healthcare settings, homeless shelters and prisons. These masking requirements, which are consistent with CDC guidance, are included in Executive Order No. 242 (2021).

The majority of state offices open to the public, including New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission locations, continue to require masking of staff and visitors. Individuals should review setting-specific requirements in advance of arrival.

## COVID-19 Cases Statewide Continue To Decrease

Despite the decrease of COVID-19 cases, Gov. Phil Murphy said the push to get more people vaccinated is not over. Vaccines are available for anyone over the age of 12 at more than 1,500 vaccination sites around the state.

Murphy reminded residents that the overwhelming number of new cases, hospitalizations and deaths in New Jersey remains among unvaccinated residents.

As of Wednesday, the state positivity rate was 1.45%, and the rate of transmission was 0.92. Hospitals had 310 patients and the number of patients in the ICU was 51 (53 last week), and there were 23 (29 last week) ventilators in use.

There were 27 additional deaths reported this week for a total of 23,781 confirmed COVID-19 deaths.

To find a vaccination site near you, visit [covid19.nj.gov/finder](http://covid19.nj.gov/finder).



South Plainfield High School Principal Robert Diehl presents Gabrielle Petrillo with the "Outstanding Student of the Year Award" from the Middlesex County Secondary Principals Association.

## Christmas in July Festival Returns to the Downtown

The eighth annual Christmas in July event, the popular summer festival held in the borough's downtown area, is back. Last year's event was cancelled due to COVID-19.

This year's event will be held later in the day and include a Christmas tree lighting. Santa Claus, led by the South Plainfield High School Marching Band and members of the borough council, will march down South Plainfield Av-

enue to open the festivities at 5 p.m. The event will run until 9 p.m.

Vendors are still needed. To sign up for a racecar or obtain a vendor form, email Cathy Herman at [cu2herman@msn.com](mailto:cu2herman@msn.com).

The Cultural Arts Commission is sponsoring a window painting contest. To register, email [spcac.nj@gmail.com](mailto:spcac.nj@gmail.com).

For the latest updates, visit Christmas in July South Plainfield on Facebook.

