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# ROOSEVELT BOROUGH



# BULLETIN

Published by Roosevelt P.T.A.

Volume VIII No 8

ROOSEVELT, NEW JERSEY

MAY 1985

## Save Our Post Office

By Aaron Datz

One day Joe Blow, a resident of Roosevelt, goes out to mail a letter and discovers that he has no stamps. Since it is important that the letter be posted that day, he drives to Hightstown for some stamps. When he returns (after his gas guzzler has used up 75 cents worth of gas), his wife, Flo Blow, says: "Where have you been?" He says, "I've been to Hightstown to buy some stamps." Flo blows up. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to the post office? This present for your mother has to be mailed right away." So Joe has to get back into his car for another 10-mile round trip and with another 75 cents worth of gas.

The above incident didn't really occur, but it could have. There is a possibility that our lovely new post office will be closed if some members of Congress have their way. Ours is one of 124 small post offices which could be closed for "economy's" sake if Congress so rules, in spite of the fact that none of our tax dollars defrays postal costs. Since 1971 the U.S. Postal Service has been self-sustaining. The people who use the mails pay for the service, and the cost of mailing a letter would not be decreased if our post office were closed.

It is not only the basic inconvenience of not having a place to buy stamps which we decry. Our post office is practically the central hub of the town; it is where people meet and pass the time of day. It is where the town's problems are discussed (and solved) and where the ills of the world are diagnosed (and cured). Our postmaster, Geraldine Millar, not only distributes the mail into the boxes: she keeps an eye out for personal problems and is helpful to those who need help. For example, recently she noticed that an old-time resident looked ill and took steps to bring her

(Cont'd. on page 3)



Joe Trabb—See story page 3

Out of Town Subscribers

Subscription renewals for the current year were due in December, 1984. If you have not paid please send \$3.00 to Lynn Friedman or Norma Kushner. Make checks payable to Roosevelt Borough Bulletin.

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Lynn Friedman, Norma Kushner, Adeline Weiner



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Editorial policy of the Borough Bulletin is to welcome open expression of ideas and opinions either in the form of articles submitted for publication or Letters to the Editors. All material should be typed, double-spaced with margins of no less than 1 1/2", on standard white typewriter paper. It is requested they be held to 3 double-spaced typewriter pages. The Editors reserve the right to reject any material they deem inappropriate.

condition to the attention of those responsible for her.

It should not be necessary to belabor the fact that the loss of our post office would be a serious loss for the community.

And how would it look for a town honored as a national historic site not even to have its own post office?

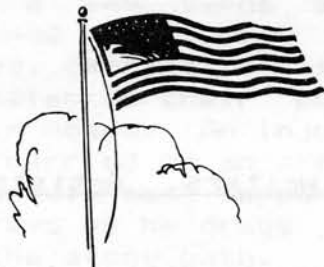
We can do something about it. We can write our Congressman and Senators and insist that we want to keep our post office.

#### Senators

Bill Bradley  
Frank Lautenberg  
U.S. Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

#### Congressman

Chris Smith  
2333 Whitehorse & Mercerville Rd.  
Mercerville, N.J. 08619



Joshua Friedman, born and raised in Roosevelt, shared a Pulitzer Prize with two others for an article in Newsday. We will have more on this in our next issue.

## Labor of Love

Joey Trabb is an inventor. He won the 3rd-4th grade invention contest in Roosevelt School in March. He then represented his grade at the regional invention competition at R.C.A.'s David Sarnoff Research Center on May 1, 1985, and won again.

Joey's invention, a track for blind runners, helps the blind runner to know when he or she might be drifting off the track, by sounding a bell or a buzzer when the runner touches the rails. Joey and his model will go on to the state finals at Rutgers later in the month.

The program is an activity of the New Jersey Department of Education's Technology for Children Program, and is supported by the Division of Vocational Education.

Teacher Ilene Levine, who has had training in running local Invention Contests, explains:

"The idea behind it is to motivate children to think creatively; to look at problems they or others have, and to try to solve them. They work through an idea to a finished product (the model) and keep a written account (the log) of all ideas and events regarding the invention. They do first hand research through surveys, including letter writing to companies. This makes a successful interdisciplinary approach to science and language arts." These logs and research, as well as the model, are considered in the judging.

The Bulletin congratulates Joey and his teacher Ilene Levine.

## Solar Village to Receive Award

Excerpts from a letter received by Leon Barth, former president of the Roosevelt Senior Citizen's Housing Corporation from R. Bruce Patty, president American Institute of Architects:

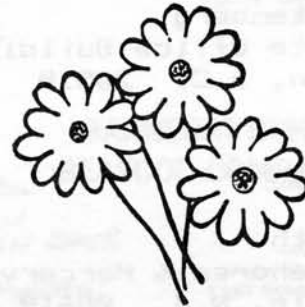
Dear Mr. Barth:

We feel sure you will be pleased to learn that Roosevelt Solar Village designed by Kelbaugh + Lee has been selected to receive an Honor Award.

A jury of seven prominent architects from across the country evaluated submissions. I would like you to know why the jury felt your project was worthy of an Honor Award:

"The Roosevelt Solar Village is a sensitive, innovative and imaginative response to the special needs of the elderly. The architects have integrated advanced solar energy concepts into designs that are warm, unpretentious and architecturally playful. They have created a strong sense of community and identity by building, in effect, a small village that through its scale, strongly vernacular design elements and choice of materials, effectively mirrors the values of its occupants. The design, realized under the constraints of a federal housing program, is modest and appropriately humble, yet does not lack variety or charm. The project is a major accomplishment not only because it serves as a model of low-income housing for the elderly that is at once domestic in scale, energy efficient, beautiful and fully cognizant of human needs."

Presentation of the awards will be made in San Francisco in June at the National Convention of the AIA.



### Poets, Writers, Artists. Take Note

As per tradition (and who can argue with tradition?), the Bulletin plans to publish an arts, poetry, etc. supplement, this year as part of our June issue.

We're seeking poems, very short stories or pieces, epigrams, favorite sayings, drawings, photographs, jokes, etc. Deadline is Monday, June 10.



## COUNCIL REPORT

## Garbage Collection Debated

By Dominic Vigiano

Lake Drive residents vehemently addressed the "garbage problem" during the public portion of the heated regular Council Meeting on Wednesday, May 8. Ms. Mary Alfara expressed her dismay at what she called the "selectivity" of our local sanitation service, contending that garbage men remove trash or not at their pleasure. Additionally, it was stated that when residents move and leave a large pile of carefully bagged trash, neighbors pick over the material, opening bags and leaving an unsightly mess which is difficult for the refuse handlers to collect.

Controversy surrounded Zoning Officer Paul Eichler's response to the garbage problem as some residents felt harassed and unreasonably threatened by summonses. Two points of view were expressed on the Council. Councilperson Seligman made an eloquent statement that as a long-time professional planner, he has never seen a more caring, concerned person than Mr. Eichler who does a difficult and thankless job. Councilperson Leefer, on the other hand, viewed Mr. Eichler's approach as tactless and abrasive as well as biased, claiming that the Zoning Officer enforces regulations in an uneven manner. In a roll call vote on the adoption of Salary Ordinance 46-12 which included an increase of Mr. Eichler's salary from \$540.00 to \$590.00, Councilperson Leefer voted the lone "no".

Other business included appointing Krystyna Bieracka

Borough Clerk at an annual salary of \$13,000. Ms. Susan Schwartz accepted the Dog Census Taker position with its \$150.00 stipend. A contract for \$1000.00 was awarded to Mills Crane Service to repair the deep pot hole on Pine Drive.

June Counterman made a plea for input from all residents for the 4th of July Committee whose next meeting is May 19th at 2:30 pm at the Municipal Building.

Ms. Counterman will welcome your presence and any ideas for this traditional celebration.



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## Survey Results

Do you remember the questionnaire introduced by Councilmember Leefer in the March 1985 issue of the Bulletin?

We reprint it here with Mr. Leefer's report on the results:

1. Should matters of aesthetics or taste be controlled by the Borough? (Type of house construction or improvement, type of fences, antennas, etc.)

2. Should matters of safety be controlled by the Borough?

3. Should ordinances be enforced?

4. Should the ordinances and regulations be enforced equally with respect to all citizens and properties?

5. Should the Borough financially support or subsidize, with your tax money, matters of benefit mostly to groups or persons of adequate income and unique eligibility?

Here are the results of the questionnaire. They continue to come in, a month after the article came out, although at a greatly reduced rate compared to the lively action during the first week or so.

I also received 4 anonymous questionnaires which couldn't be counted, though they conformed generally to the typical pattern; many submissions included comments (all constructive and/or supportive); and one unidentifiable one came 22 cents postage due. Some of the responses were more or less qualified, so I had to use my own judgment concerning their validity and pertinence to the questionnaire, and when I considered them too far off the subject I put them in the "no answer" category.

As you will see, the 68 responses is significant, and I thank you.

The tabulation follows:

Ques. Subject	Yes	No	No Ans.
1. Aesthetics	1	60	3
2. Safety	60	1	3
3. Enforcement	63	1	0
4. Equal Enforce.	61	0	3
5. Subsidy	0	56	8

The table does not include 4 anonymous submissions.

A few observations are in order. About a dozen people spoke to me personally about the questions, and each promised to send in their forms. Not one did. Perhaps they thought the conversations counted, but I don't feel they should be included in the count.

By coincidence, last Month's Bulletin contains an item asking that copies not be discarded at the Post Office. This request complements some of my thoughts. For instance, what percentage of the Roosevelt population read my survey? How many Bulletins were discarded at the Post Office; how many at home, without being read; how promptly are they read; what portions?

Since there are about 600 adults in Roosevelt, and about 400 of them voted in the last general election, the response rate to the questionnaire is quite high, even assuming a no-throwaway rate: a minimum of 11% of the total adult population and 16% of the voters. Of those properly responding, 8% to 9% agreed with my positions.

Now I want to discuss a matter of some importance that relates to question #1.

The Planning Board has, for some time, been preparing an ordinance for submission and adoption by the Council, to restrict the manner in which Roosevelt houses could be mod-

ified or built, to maintain the Historical Designation for Roosevelt.

The ordinance is purported to be advisory. A number of people have reported that members of the Planning Board had assured them that the provisions of the proposed ordinance are not compulsory, but only advisory.

This is not true. I have the last two draft copies of the ordinance and attended the May 1st meeting of the Planning Board at which the fourth draft was discussed for 2 hours.

At this point the advisory portion addresses itself to an addition 10% or less of the original living area of the house, and not visible from the street. (What part of the street?) For the average Roosevelt house, this is about 150 square feet or, typically, a 10 ft. by 15 ft. room completely out of sight from any part of the street.

Otherwise the ordinance is mandatory, and violations are subject to severe fines. There is also a requirement for a lengthy and complex application procedure for a building permit which exceeds even that for obtaining a variance.

Except for the penalty sections, which are specific, the ordinance is fraught with personal subjectivity, vague romanticism, abstractions, undefined criteria, convoluted definitions, opinions and prejudices. Almost entirely absent are clear criteria and quantitative standards.

This is an open invitation for the exercise of uneven and prejudiced enforcement, dependent on the personal whim of whoever happens to be on the Board at the moment of one's application.

When I informed the Planning Board members of the results of this informal poll, one responded

by saying he planned to disregard it. Another told me he plans to vote his own taste irrespective of public opinion and if they didn't like it they could vote him out when his term expires. (This is not an elective office).

However, a number of the Board Members seemed to share my feelings and the draft was sent back for further extensive revisions and, one hopes, to oblivion.

Another matter, referred by the Council to the Board, requested recommendations for the rezoning of an area from Industrial to Residential to spare the homes on Homestead Lane, as well as the Borough Hall, from the imminent threat of industrial contamination. It had languished in limbo for 2 months. When I broached the subject, it was discussed for a few minutes and then deferred for a third month. It seems the homeowners on Homestead Lane have a low priority in contrast to the Historic Designation ordinance.

I do not plan to make these notes a regular feature, but I will try to keep you advised about pending important Council matters, and seek your positions thereon.

I also can offer you my limited assistance in any realistic manner that I can, in my capacity on the Council.

My personal political philosophy is: if I disagree with a consensus, or even a substantial group of citizens, which would normally govern my position, I will present my reasons why, or debate the matter to a conclusion. But, generally, I will try to represent the majority, (regardless of my personal opinions) so long as it does no unjust harm to a minority or an individual.

By Bernard Leefler



## NEIGHBORS

*Glad Tidings: Born-Again Lake*

The eighteen and one half acres of mud flats that only recently was Etra Lake sometimes offers the passing motorist a hint of end-of-the-world finality. At other times it is a scene of primordial ooze suggesting strange forms of life. In any case the antediluvian landscape is a cheerless spectacle.

This effect, says Bud Cann, NJ environmental specialist, Division of Water Resources, is simply Phase 1 of a two-part program to revive this scenic but nearly dead lake. A natural process of eutrication or excessive growth of weeds unrelated to pollution, inevitably turns lakes into swamps and swamps into woods. When in 1980 Etra Lake was choked up to a depth of three feet and completely unusable, East Windsor Township initiated a study and wound up with a grant of \$546,000 to be raised from federal (50%), state (40%), county (5%), and township (5%) contributions.

After opening a 16-inch valve to allow lake water to drain into Rocky Brook (and on into the Millstone River), the lake bed and its burden of macrophyte growth has been left to dry out for several months. At the end of this summer, a contractor company will bring bulldozers, barges, cranes and dump trucks to load and carry off 74,000 cubic yards of bottom sediment. The sludge will be used either for highway construction, in which case there will be no cost for hauling, or dumped on forty acres of township land out beyond the new Etra Park recently created by the Green Acres Division of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Township Manager Reagan Burkholder told us that by the end of this year the drained lake will be dredged to a depth of six feet, refilled and dammed up once again. The township council will then decide on how best to utilize its clean-water playground: for boating, fishing and/or swimming. The hope is for the lake to be restored and ready for action during the summer of 1986.

Mr. Burkholder thought the town will require a fee for use with varying admissions for outsiders in order to enable the recreational facilities to be self-supporting. As part of the master plan for Lake Etra and the charming Etra Park Environmental Center, land already bought up by the township is allotted for building an 18-hole golf course.

Roosevelt residents, it goes without saying, have every reason to be delighted with these developments. It is our good fortune to have around three sides of us the Assunpink Wildlife Preserve; within town, the Green Acres land; and now thanks to our good neighbor East Windsor township, a lovely recreational lake and park only three miles to our north.

By Adeline Weiner





## MINUTES AGO

**When Warm Spots Were Most to be Feared**

By Arthur Shapiro

How nice it was to learn that the township of East Windsor, the county of Mercer, the state of New Jersey and the government of the United States are all "kicking in" to reclaim Etra Lake for recreational purposes. They're even going to allow swimming again! Of course, the new lake will have new water, new fish, new people and new rules. With the addition of things like sand beaches and life guards the place won't seem the same, but at least it will be much safer. In the old days you were really on your own!

During the time I was growing up in the late 1940's and 50's, there were only four places where you could swim in the area, either of the two sides of Perrineville Lake (Tolan's and Gruden's) or the two sides of Etra Lake (Greenberg's and Katz's.)

Only rich people owned private swimming pools—certainly no one around here (except the Mondlins—but their pool was really an inverted surplus army pontoon bridge filled with water.) On a hot summer day you either went to one of the lakes or you ran under the hose on your lawn. When the temperature soared hundreds of local people and their visiting relatives from the city could be found at the lakes. At Etra, cars on Greenberg's side would be parked as far back as the Hechalutz farm. Katz's side would often have cars parked as far back as Penny's Tavern on Cedarville Road.

Each side of Etra Lake had its distinct advantages. Greenberg had a bar with a bathroom you could use if you really had to go. Near the back of the bar was a handball court that the men used to shoot craps against. Mr. Greenberg also sold some junk food like Drakes Cakes, Twinkies and soda. Most people, however, brought their own food and ate picnic style. Katz's had a complete store where they sold Dolly Madison ice cream, hot dogs, hamburgers and sodas.

Although the lake in Perrineville was easier to get to by bike from Roosevelt—by taking the back road extension of Oscar Drive past Big Alice's—most people seemed to prefer Etra. On real hot days, you considered yourself lucky to get a spot at either lake.

Since neither lake provided lifeguards nor had any specific rules, each swimmer was responsible for his or her own safety. The only rules a kid had to obey were those laid down by his or her mother. Those who couldn't swim had to stay in the shallow water or use an inner tube.

Swimming with a tube was fun, especially if you could get a big one from Lou Bunkin, Sy Simons or one of the other truck drivers in town. (You had to be careful, though, not to scratch your back with the valve.) A valve scratch, however, was not the worst of our fears which included:

Cramps—One of our main fears was getting cramps in deep water. Also, it was understood that one got cramps from going back into the water too soon after eating. Therefore, most Roosevelt mothers

had a loosely agreed-upon list of times it was safe to go back into the water after downing certain foods like,

a bottle of YooHoo chocolate soda....10 minutes out of the water.

a salami or peanut butter sandwich...45 minutes out of the water.(with soda-one full hour!)

an ice cream sandwich....15 minutes out of the water.

a hot dog or hamburger....25 minutes out of the water.

Rusty fishhooks- One could swim from Katz's to Greenberg's or back but one had to be sure he or she could make it all the way without having to come out on the shore line between them. That's the spot the fishermen used and sometimes they would lose or tangle their lines in the mud or reeds. We always imagined hundreds of rusty fishhooks waiting in the mud for the chance to give us lockjaw.

Polio- Every so often a rumor would circulate that the lake was polluted and would cause us to catch polio. I remember more than once having visions of Sister Kenny working over me because I went swimming when I wasn't supposed to.


Warm Spots- Our biggest fears were coming upon warm spots when swimming. At all costs one had to avoid a contented kid smiling in the water, especially one who recently polished off a bottle of soda.

The new life guards will be able to save those with cramps; the fishhooks have been cleaned out; and thanks to Dr. Salk, Polio is no longer a problem. For some reason however, I don't think that they will ever really conquer the warm spots!



Photo: The author avoiding a scratch.





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Note To Senior Citizens

A trip around Manhattan for Seniors is in the offing. A bus, supplied by Social Services, through the efforts of Phyllis Backover is available. The fee for the boat is \$8.00 for Seniors. Date and time to be announced. It is necessary to know how many people are interested. If you are, please bring \$8.00 to the next meeting.

Esther Pogrebin  
President

Benefit Fashion Show

To be held at the Clarksburg Inn. Sat. June 1st, 1985, from 7 pm until.....Donation \$7.00, \$7.50 at the door. Proceeds for charity. Eleanor M. Jenkins, Chairperson. Norma Randolph, Co-chairperson. For information call 259-7435. For ticket information call Jeanette Koffler 448-2259.

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Borough of Roosevelt has a full time position available. Duties include maintenance work, trainee for water & sewer plant operations. High School education required. For more information please contact the Borough Clerk at (609) 448-0539 Monday through Friday 9 am-4 pm. E.O.E.

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## SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

## Graduation Dates Set

By Herbert Johnson

Graduation dates are set: Saturday, June 22 is the day for eighth grade students; Thursday, June 20 is the day for twelfth grade students at Hightstown High. The names of the latter are listed below.

The parents of three eighth graders came to the May 2 School Board meeting. Two requested the graduation be on Sunday instead of Saturday if it would not be inconvenient for anyone. One preferred it to stay on Saturday. A letter from another parent opposed to changing the date was read by the board president Mary King. As noted above, the board voted to retain the original date.

Last month the board elected Ms. King to be president and John Burghardt to be vice president. The president then appointed the other eight members of the board each to serve on at least two of the board's ten committees. Meeting dates were agreed upon so that five committees could report at the board's first meeting each month and the others could report at the second regular meeting.

At another meeting of the board last month, science teacher Ilene Levine showed the board the moon rocks she had received for our school from NASA. She described the six kinds of rock or soil samples, told how they were formed and from which part of the moon they were collected. Board members were able to look through a school microscope, just as all the science students in our school have done, at the crystalline and other features of the soils formed from moon lava, mel-

ted minerals, and meteorite collisions on the atmosphere-less planet.

In other business the board voted to allow a league of Coca Cola employees, including some residents of Roosevelt, to use the school gym for its basketball games on Sundays as long as it complied with the board's guidelines. The board had first readings on two new or revised policies: Participation in Interscholastic Activities, and Recognition of Employees and Board Members. In the former the emphasis in the intellectual or athletic activities was placed on providing enriching experiences for the participants rather than on producing winning teams. One of the interesting requirements is that a student cannot participate in an interscholastic activity if he or she has been on any kind of school suspension within a week of the event. The other policy calls for having group plaques in the school lobby honoring school employees who have served more than ten years and have retired or died, and those who have served at least three consecutive years on the Board of Education. Two months ago I had appealed for recognition of board members in that manner.

In last month's Bulletin, winners of Roosevelt's first Science Fair were pictured. In the regional competition, Joey Trabb won first place for his proposal and model of a track for blind runners. He will go to the New Jersey finals. Ilene Levine is the teacher of science at our school who stimulated Joe and many other students to invent,

design, and describe many fascinating projects. Congratulations were sent to all of those students.

High School students from Roosevelt who received special honors this month were eleventh graders Abby Rose at the Princeton High School where she is a National Merit Scholar nominee, the Student Council vice president, and the Temple University Journalism Competition 2nd prize winner, and Lisa Soden who received high honors at the Hightstown High School. Others who were on the honor roll at Hightstown were freshman Joshua Brahinsky, juniors Donna Ernstein and Erik Shapiro, seniors David Ashkinazy, Mark Katz, Debbie Nahmias, and Ernie Sajgo. Those four seniors have decided to begin advanced studies in September: International Studies at Manhattanville College in Purchase, NY; Political Science Pre-Law at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA; English at Washington College in Chestertown, MD; and Business at Mercer County Community College where Theresa Seay will begin Nursing Studies. Our other Hightstown High twelfth graders are Sharon Skillman who will begin majoring in Psychology at Georgian Court College in Lakewood, NJ and Brydie Loyer who had not decided by the time of this writing.

The RPS graduates are:

Dylan Altman  
Amy Block  
Cherylann Clayton  
Jack Guyette  
Matthew Hazell  
Karen Johnson  
Michael Selden  
David Zaleski



## CONGRATULATIONS



Solidarity March

By Erik Shapiro

On May 5, 1985, I had one of the greatest experiences of my life, while marching to the United Nations with about 250,000 others. The event was the 14th annual Solidarity March calling for the release of Soviet Jews who have been refused emigration.

At this rally, which began at 5th Ave. and 70th Street and ended at the United Nations building, the solidarity was very evident. Babies in strollers participated alongside elders with canes. There was a diversity of people ranging from black frocked Orthodox Jews to neo-orthodox and included some teen-agers with punk dress and hairdos.

Among the speakers were Mayor Ed. Koch, Gov. Mario Cuomo, Cardinal designate O'Connor, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynahan, Sen. Alphonse D'Amato and Elie Weisel.

Weisel spoke eloquently, calling the rally "Our answer to Bitburg." It was an emotional speech causing many to weep openly for family and friends who are prisoners behind the Iron Curtain. Neither my mother nor I will ever forget this very moving experience.

Senior Citizen's Meeting-May 2, 1985

By Helga Wisowaty

This meeting was concerned primarily with plans for future trips and changes in procedure. Our meetings will be held at 2:00 pm on Tuesdays starting in June (instead of Thursday)- the first Tuesday of each month at either the Borough Hall or the Solar Village.

A trip to South Seaport (New York) and one to see a play and have dinner are being checked out.

During this meeting a few members entertained us with stories relating to experiences they remembered. It brightened our day and we're sure that almost all of us will join in by sharing our experiences at future meetings.

Our picnic this year will be at the Chasans'-alternate will be Berdie Soykas' home.

Our hostesses were Esther Pogrebin and Sue Schmidt.

GARY GALLIKER

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## Roosevelt School Calendar

June 1985

5 Wednesday,	7-8:30pm	Monmouth County Bookmobile-P.O. Parking Lot
	8 pm	Planning Board- Borough Hall
6 Thursday,	2 pm	Senior Citizens- Borough Hall
	8 pm	Board of Education- RPS
10 Monday	8 pm	Borough Council Agenda- Borough Hall
12 Wednesday	8 pm	Borough Council- Borough Hall
18 Tuesday	1-4 pm	Senior Citizens Health Program
		Community room- Solar Village
	1-8 pm	Roosevelt Food Co-op- Borough Hall
19 Wednesday	7-8:30 pm	Monmouth County Bookmobile- P.O. Parking Lot
20 Thursday	8 pm	Board of Education- RPS
22 Saturday	7 pm	Eighth Grade Graduation- Amphitheater

## LETTER TO EDITOR

## Small Town Big Heart


Dear Editor

Roosevelt is a small town but once again has proved that it has a big heart. We would particularly like to commend two Rooseveltians for their neighborly care and concern. Lore Phillips, our mother, had not told anyone that she was ill, but Gerry Millar, Postmaster noticed that she appeared sick and told Elly Shapiro. Elly, in turn, made persistent efforts to notify someone in the family of her condition. These two women went out of their way to help a neighbor thus carrying on the Roosevelt tradition. We thank them both.

The daughters of Lore Phillips:

Laramie Palmer,  
Charlotte Phillips,  
Elinor Tucker

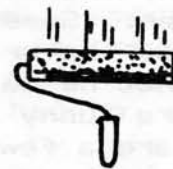
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## Headlines and Blotters

By Josef G. Solomon

Will Rogers was killed in a plane crash in 1935. He is still remembered. One of the remarks Will Rogers was famous for was, "All I know is what I read in the papers." To show you how far we have declined in the past fifty years, a recent survey indicates that, for many Americans, all they know is what they see on television. (That is, they get their news from television, and only from television.) Even worse-off than that, however, are the people of whom it could be said that all they know is what they read in the headlines. It is necessary to keep reminding oneself that the person who wrote the headline didn't even read the article. Over the years, (Perhaps I should say, "immanently") some of them remain in my mind, however. Sometimes they're funny because the writer doesn't realize what he said, and sometimes they're funny because he does. Here are a few.

#### "Man Hit By Car Critical"

That conjures up (well, in my mind, anyway) a picture of the victim, sitting in the street and scolding the driver who just knocked him down. I told that to a friend of mine once, and he countered with a headline he had seen that was even funnier. Unfortunately, it can't be printed here. If you're interested, ask me.

#### Religion in Oklahoma

There aren't many Jews in the state of Oklahoma, which may ac-

count for the ignorance of many Oklahomans about Jews and Judaism. (I used to work alongside an American Indian. Even though he was a Christian, he was so ignorant about Judaism that he actually asked me, in my capacity as official representative of all the Jews in the world, "You do believe in God, don't you?") One day, there was an article about Tisha B'Av--the ninth day of the Hebrew month Av--in the religion section of the newspaper. In the year 586 BCE, the First Temple was destroyed--on Tisha B'Av. More than 600 years later, the Second Temple was destroyed--on Tisha B'Av. Tisha B'Av became and remains a day of mourning, and a fast-day. Before the fast, some religious Jews mix ashes with their food, as a symbolic way of demonstrating their mourning over the destruction of the two Temples. I don't remember anything about that article, from that day in 1953, but I will never forget the headline:

"Jews Eat Ashes"

From a different perspective, you might say, consider this one:  
"Philadelphia Bible Smites Opponents"

That headline was for a basketball game. Some day, there will be a headline like unto,

"Philadelphia Textile Sews Up Championship"

When it happens, I hope I see it.

Some of the humor in these newspapers, surely, is accidental. Only a few weeks ago, the stately New York Times had a headline that ran,

"Court Upholds Officer Dusted as Nude Model"

What kind of picture does that conjure up in your mind?

As printed in the newspaper, the police blotter is usually fairly dull reading, but sometimes it does get interesting. For example, an item about a man who reported that he was in the bathtub in his own home, when a strange man appeared in the bathroom. "used the facilities", and left. Another time, that same newspaper had the report from which the following is excerpted:

A two-car accident at the corner of ...occurred on Jan. 21, at 2:50 p.m., police reported. Cars driven by ...S---and ...L--- were involved. Mr. L--- was given a ticket for violating a stop sign. There were no injuries.

Mr. L--- doesn't know how lucky he is. Violating a stop sign can be a very painful experience for a man. I don't know how the stop sign feels about it. Violated, I guess. (Mr. L--- didn't violate the stop sign; he violated the ordinance that required him to stop at a stop sign.)

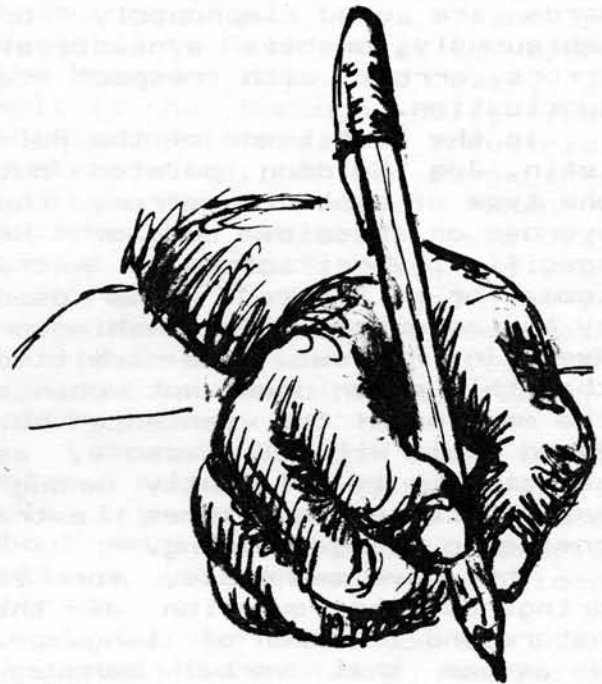
From my point of view, the frustrating part is that I don't know whether the writer did that on purpose. Ordinarily, the instant conclusion would be that he did not--and that is probably the truth. However, that item appeared in the same newspaper that once reported the theft of a bag of bagels that had been delivered to, and left outside, a store before it opened in the morning. The report concluded with the information that "there was no cream cheese involved in the incident."

See what you're missing when you don't read the police blotter?

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## Love of Words - A Reply

By David Brahinsky

I have an abiding respect for those who watch over, guard and protect our language from abuse and distortion. When meaning is altered or made ambiguous by improper usage, communication is blocked, understanding inhibited and our lives diminished. This can happen semantically, when words are used improperly or ambiguously, or via syntactical errors, errors with respect to punctuation.

In the last issue of the Bulletin, Joe Solomon pointed out one type of syntactic error, the overuse or abuse of commas. He specifically criticized an extra comma, or an implied comma used by the announcer of "Washington Week In Review". He admitted that this error does not change the meaning of the sentence but found fault with it because, as he said, it is "blatantly wrong" and because sometimes extra commas do change meaning.

This gave me pause, for it brings up the question of the nature and function of language. We assume that verbal language evolved out of body language, including sounds; that the spoken word evolved out of the need to communicate with more and more specificity and complexity. Let us say that in ancient times, one person wanted to distinguish a rabbit from a mole, and let us say he was satisfied when his friend showed comprehension by cooking rabbit stew instead of mole mush. At dinnertime, we presume, he became satisfied that his meaning had been communicated. Whatever word he used for "rabbit" had been understood.

The general point is that, as

in this case, when meaning has been transmitted effectively, language has been properly used. Complex rules of syntax and semantics have evolved as our need to communicate with greater specificity and complexity has evolved. With such complexity comes the danger of misunderstanding-but such a danger has always prevailed and is one reason why rules and conventions have developed.

Still, it seems to me that communication remains the nub: usage is "right" when it is facilitated; "wrong" when it is not. Wrong or right usage, in other words, is functional, contextual, not rigidly structural or written in stone.

As for extra commas, destroy them when they alter or confuse the meaning. Life is confusing enough without ambiguity producing (extra) commas. But when they are harmless, when, as in the case of the implied comma in "Washington Week in Review", when they, as Joe admits, do not alter the meaning, I say, as did the ancient Chinese sage, No Blame. Perseverance furthers. It is possible to cross the Great Water. Or, as the guy from Brooklyn once said, "Don't worra 'bout itch; I getchya."

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# An Immodest Proposal

Enough of commas! Also periods, colons, semi-colons, question marks!

For much of the life of this newspaper, I have been deeply concerned with the punctuation, as well as spelling and grammar of its contents. (Alert readers, of course, will have noticed that I have many times missed necessary corrections. For these I do apologize).

I used to believe (in college, long ago, when a certain English Composition prof. found fault with my punctuation) that punctuation is a matter of individual style. Booth Tarkington, I said at the time, used a great many dashes. I liked dashes. The prof. marked many of my weekly themes D minus minus---. I found a cousin who taught English in high school; I got her to teach me the (sacrosanct) rules of punctuation. My marks improved very quickly, because the prof. liked what I wrote as soon as the punctuation met her standards.

But now--- I have wearied of the rules, and of the confusion engendered by the writing of

younger members of our staff who tell me the rules have changed---and I make this proposal: Let us publish without any punctuation at all, and let the reader provide it as he or she wishes.

Here is an example from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address:

---but in a larger sense we can not dedicate we can not consecrate we can not hallow this ground the brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract the world will little note nor long remember what we say here but it can never forget what they did here it is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced

Want to try punctuating it? Here are some marks, Place them as you please. You may not need them all:

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## *I Remember, I Remember*

By Stavro Danilov

As East Jerusalemites awoke June 5, 1967, the third Arab-Israeli War started. Aside from a little surprise, there was no fear. It was not till mid-morning, when a few soldiers and able bodied men began to prepare for a possible battle by digging additional trenches throughout the Arab quarter where I lived, that everyone was struck by the reality of war. To help out, women and children filled bags and pillow cases with sand and earth. However, as the gun fire increased and as the rattle of machine guns was joined by the hollow explosions of mortars, the roads emptied rapidly. The quarter turned into a ghost town. Separating us from the Jordanian-Israeli border were rolls of barbed wire, semi-trained soldiers and piles of sand bags.

Eleven of us took refuge in the family bedroom. We assumed that its location at the center of the house together with its thick roof, walls and doors would provide some measure of protection. We were crammed in two places, under my parents' bed and in two built-in wall closets. Our hope of survival was to stay clear of doors and windows, and in particular, those of the adjacent veranda which was only a few meters from a precipice that overlooked an open panorama from the Walled City to the Dead Sea and which was a target from a continuing hail of bullets. Our movement was restricted to going to the bathroom or the kitchen. An explosion here, another there. "That must have struck our next door neighbor's house." Boom.

Boom. Most family members are crying. "God, don't leave us now." An enormous bang hits the front door. A sound of shattering glass fills the room. With tears running down her face, my sister (who later became a Roman Catholic nun) lifts her voice in prayer as we join in reciting the Lord's prayer. Boom. The walls tremble. Our shelter's heavy reinforced door, suitable for a vault, moves forward. The smell of cordite permeates the air. We push further into the closet hoping that additional layers of clothes and depth in the wall would protect us.

At night, although the exchange of fire was reduced, we remained confined to our shelter. The nightmare experience of the day--the blindness of stray bullets and fear of the unknown--had immobilized us. Glowing in the darkness and partially illuminating the main features of terribly sad and frightened faces was a candle lit in front of an ancient icon. The walls reflected abstract images contracting and expanding with the flickering of the candle light. They had an hypnotizing effect. When the candle finally went out and the images disappeared, almost everyone was asleep. The heavy bombardment in the distance, the exchange of fire in the neighborhood and the occasional rumbling of airplanes flying overhead could not keep them awake. In spite of the moaning and snoring of some family members, sleeping among friendly bodies had a reassuring and soothing quality about it.

This feeling was only transient, for as soon as the sun rose high above Jerusalem, the



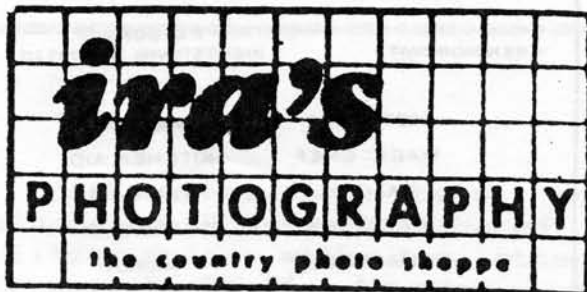
experience of the previous afternoon was repeated. In addition, the clank and clutter of bulldozers or tanks joined the ensemble of unwelcome and vexing noises. By mid-day, a neighbor came to our house and explained that the Jordanian army was withdrawing. He added, "We massacred many Jews in Hebron in 1929. The Jews will kill all the people in the quarter including you all." My mother answered without guile, "We are Christians; they will not hurt us." He replied, "Like the Crusaders, the Jews don't know the difference between Muslims and Christians."

My parents took a little bag of our most precious treasures and told us, "Let's go." If there needed to be an argument, we were already convinced by more than a full day of continuous bombing, shell-fire and the magic lighting of tracer bullets in the darkness of the night. "Place the ladder from the garden's edge to the street below," my father said, "and let's move quickly." One by one, we descended, joining the exodus of neighbors and others a few yards away. A frightened girl, with tears in her eyes, carries a tiny baby. Women balanced their possessions on their heads. An injured young man is carried on an army litter while an old man, supported by a lad, prays as he drags his feet along the stony path.

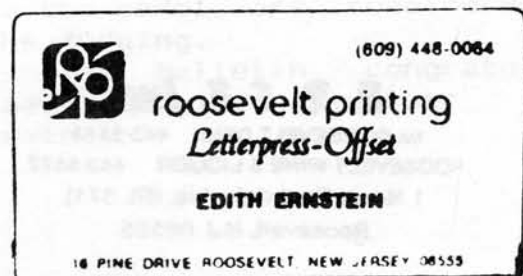
It was not till some time later that an elder brother and I realized we were separated from our family. We began searching but with no success. I wanted, at least, to return home. My brother would not permit it. The deadly sound of bombing in the far horizon from where we had just come prevented anyone from thinking correctly. Through this drama of the living and the dead, we continued running, uncertain about our exact destination or real destiny. Hand in hand, we jumped walls, traversed fields and, from time to time, took shelter in caves and chicken coops. Whatever direction we took, a shower of bullets seemed to follow.

At dawn, we resumed our flight. After some conversation, we left the shepherdless mass and turned about taking a different way home. Burning military vehicles, burned-out cars, swelling corpses, odors of death...nothing mattered. We wanted to find our family.

With a homing instinct, we faced from whence we came. In time, we found the ladder was still there. Like Jacob of old, I saw no angels coming down, so I climbed, in truth to the aiding hands of those most close. Although the threats of death were still present, time dispelled everything. I know love again.



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