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# focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

April, 2006

## A 'match' made in heaven for area soccer club

### South Colonie students get a real 'kick' from trip overseas

How are South Colonie students getting their kicks these days? Well, if you're into soccer, how about four road games all the way across the Atlantic Ocean.

That's how a group of Colonie Central High School boys belonging to the Colonie Soccer Club spent their winter break — lacing up their spikes for a nine-day journey of a lifetime to Europe. The trip for the traveling soccer club — a not-for-profit community organization from the Town of Colonie — included lessons in character, culture and competition.

"It was an unforgettable experience," said Tom and Will Plowinske, teammates and freshmen at Colonie Central. "We all had a great time. The chance to compete overseas was a great opportunity for all of us."

Seventeen players from the traveling team, their families and coaches visited Northern Portugal in February and the Cities of Esposende, Ovar, Fão, Porto, Guimarães, Braga, Fatima and Nazare, to name a few. In addition to a number of activities designed to expose the teens to Portuguese culture, the team played four soccer matches and ended its trip with a record of 3-1. The lone defeat was a 1-0 loss to the Esterreja Soccer Club in a very competitive night game.

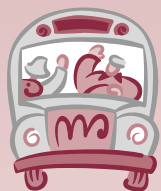


First graders at Shaker Road Elementary School completed a study on author Laura Ingalls Wilder (*Little House on the Prairie* fame) and pioneer life by creating a one-room schoolhouse in their classroom in March. Students came to school dressed like pioneer children, learned by lantern, wrote on slate boards and with quill pens, held an old fashioned spelling bee, churned butter like Jessica Taylor (left) and Sara Mainville (above), played pioneer games, baked cornbread and had a maple syrup taste test.

The trip got underway with a reception hosted by the County of Esposende. During this reception, the team had an opportunity to learn about the history of the County of Esposende and the various towns within it. Immediately following the reception, the team toured several historical monuments dating back to the 12th century.

During their stay, the team visited the city of Guimarães, the Birthplace of Portugal, and had an opportunity to tour a 13th century castle and palace. On their day off from soccer play it was off to Fatima, a religious site recognized throughout the world, and the

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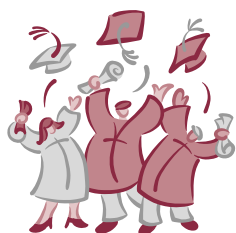


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J. T. and Meghan Mitchell

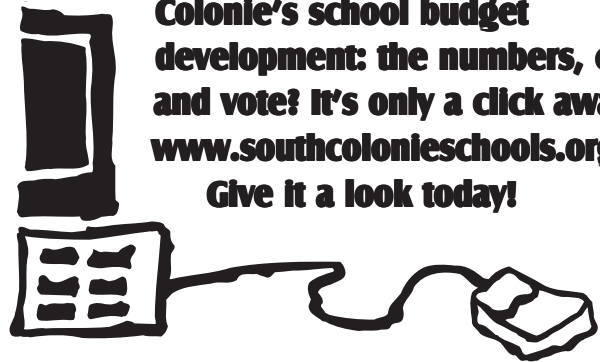
## South Colonie youth lobby U.S. Congress

Two South Colonie students traveled all the way to Washington, D.C., this year to lobby Congress on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation. Meghan Mitchell, a sixth grader at Sand Creek Middle School, and J.T. Mitchell, a second grader at Saddlewood Elementary School, were there to lobby Congress to pass the Arthritis Prevention Control and Cure Act of 2005. Meg has had Juvenile Arthritis since she was in first grade and was named a Volunteer of the Year for the Arthritis Foundation in October, 2005. The Arthritis Walk is being held at Sand Creek Middle School on May 13 due to the fact that Meghan is a student at that school. She helped the Sand Creek Student Government raise over \$400 for the Arthritis Walk last year and hopes to do the same this year.

Meghan and J.T. were trained how to advocate and how to get their point across. The children then were part of meetings with the staffs of New York State Senators Hilliary Clinton and Charles Schumer, and U.S. Congressman Michael McNulty. The two represented the Capital District and New York State. More than 300 advocates from 40 states attended this summit. Meg and J.T. have devoted many hours to the Arthritis Foundation of Northeastern New York.

Hey, where are you going to find ...

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## A passport to Egypt for Forest Park Elementary

It was enough to make the Albany Institute of History and Art proud. During March, Forest Park Elementary School teachers Liisa Danton and Kathleen Tunny's third graders had their own museum of Egyptian artifacts displayed for parents and students to view. The students had been studying Egypt for nearly three months and created their projects based on their knowledge and research of this historical country.



## Happy birthday Dr. Seuss!

### Saddlewood Elementary 'Seuss-a-thon' event would make the Cat in the Hat purr

Crazy socks? Green Grinch or Sour Stripe clothing? Menus written in Seuss-isms? Yes, all this and more abounded during Saddlewood Elementary School's first Seuss-a-thon! Originally created as a one-day event to celebrate reading on March 2, the National Education Association's (NEA) "Read Across America" event has grown into a nationwide initiative promoting reading every day. Saddlewood turned this one-day event into a week-long celebration during the week of February 28 to March 3. For more on this event visit our school web site.



The Colonie Soccer Club plays a match against their Portuguese peers. The team, made up of mostly South Colonie students, went 3-1 on their trip overseas.

## ... soccer club

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historical fishing Village of Nazare. The team was also given a special tour of the soccer stadium in the City of Braga and received an unexpected kick when it discovered a First Division professional soccer team — the Gil Vicent Soccer Club — was staying at the same hotel. The two teams had breakfast together and discussed what it is like to be a professional soccer player. Later, the Colonie club was invited by Gil Vicent to be its guest at one of its critical soccer matches.

But perhaps the most enjoyable activity for students, said CCHS sophomore Liam Keegan, was a stop at the regional high school in Esposende.

"Playing soccer against the Portuguese teams was great, but I really enjoyed our visit to the high school where we got to know the Portuguese kids and talk about what it is like to live and go to school in Portugal versus the United States," Keegan said.

Club Coach Joe Santos was equally impressed with the trip. "It was great to have our kids play under 'real' experiences, against players who aspire to play at the professional level as they filter up through the various levels," he said. "The many spectators that saw the matches were treated to highly competitive games and quality soccer."

The trip could never have been undertaken without the support of large and small sponsors, said assistant coach and team manager Larry Logan. These sponsors included the Colonie Soccer Club Board of Directors, various state, county and town officials in New York State and Portugal, the parents and players.

"I can't express my thanks enough," Logan said. "The financial support of the sponsors assured that a number of players, who might not have been able to participate in the trip, were able to experience a memorable cultural and athletic exchange. It was most gratifying to see the smiles, laughter, and sportsmanship that developed between our players and the Portuguese teenagers they encountered on the field, in the streets and in their schools."

John Monteiro, a member of the South Colonie Board of Education and assistant coach of the team added, "This group of young men represented our country, state and our community extremely well. They were wonderful ambassadors who wanted to learn about the Portuguese culture. I am extremely proud of the way they conducted themselves."

## CCHS captures top FBLA awards

Colonie Central High School seniors Kyle Rueckert and Paul Angelo each captured first place finishes at this year's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) district meeting at the Empire State Plaza in February. Some 20 schools and 300 students in the region participated in a variety of writing contests. Paul earned top honors for Business Communications and Kyle was first in Business Ownership and Career and Financial Management. CCHS's FBLA Advisor is Kevin Fottrell.

## Students cast shadow at work

Eighth graders from Sand Creek Middle School spent a day in March participating in a job shadow experience at the New York State Office of Emergency Management. During an orientation session the students learned how teamwork among the various state agencies helps to solve problem in crisis situations throughout the state. Each student also had an opportunity to spend time one-on-one with a professional mentor and tour the facility.

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In Focus Editor: John K. Noetzel



The Shaker Road Elementary School family put on an Academy Award-level performance in March when it raised more than \$1,000 for the Albany Medical Center Children's Hospital at a school movie night. The money, one of the largest onetime volunteer collections from a school, was raised through donations at the door, raffles and sales of pizza, popcorn, baked goods and wrist bands.

## Congratulations to our spelling bee winners

These South Colonie students won their annual school spelling bees this year and were invited to participate in the Capital Region Spelling Bee held in March. The winners were by grade: Andrew Talbot (5), Derek Hildenbrand (6), Matthew Reohr (7), Carthis Mannikarotuu (8) and Sarah Mele (8).

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