

in

south
colonie
central
schools



Voter Info pg 2

Bus tax impact pg 2

Shaker Road playground open pg 2



Rudy visit pg 3

Sex offenders pg 3

Tax rate lower pg 4

Saddlewood UPK . pg 4

Go Home Early Drill
November 9 pg 4



focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

October, 2007

Hard work leads to lots of play at Shaker Road



It's all hands on deck for volunteers constructing the new Shaker Road Elementary School playground — Turtle Town — this summer with \$35,000 raised by the PTA. Story on page 2.

New school buses on fall ballot

South Colonie residents to vote October 18th
Polls open 11 am - 9 pm

South Colonie residents will go to the polls on Thursday, October 18th, to vote on the annual school bus proposition to upgrade the district Transportation Department. The polls will be open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the district's five elementary schools. There is **NO** voting at the high school or middle schools. *(More information on page 2)*

What's on the ballot?

The district is asking for voter approval to spend \$500,500 to purchase seven new transportation vehicles to meet the district's annual replacement schedule. This includes:

- \$288,000 for the purchase of three, 66-passenger school buses, at \$96,000 per vehicle;
- \$194,000 for the purchase of two, 66-passenger school buses with luggage storage, at \$97,000 per vehicle;
- \$22,000 for the purchase of one, 5-passenger Suburban;

Continued on page 2 ... bus vote

South Colonie Job Fair



November 8th • 6-7 p.m.
Room 211 • Colonie High School

Need a job? Learn more by attending this one-hour informational seminar. Supervisors of the Buildings & Grounds, Food Service and Transportation Departments will be on hand to explain the duties associated with each district position. Minimum qualifications will be covered, and employment applications will be available. Training is provided for most positions including bus drivers.



Who can vote on October 18th?

You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

Voting Sites

FOREST PARK ELEMENTARY

100 Forest Drive (869-3006)

ROESSLEVILLE ELEMENTARY

100 California Ave. (459-2157)

SADDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

100 Loralee Drive (456-2608)

SHAKER ROAD ELEMENTARY

512 Shaker Road (458-1440)

VEEDER ELEMENTARY

25 Veeder Drive (869-4661)

Absentee ballots online

Absentee ballots may now be downloaded online from the district web site. Look under Administration (top of page)/ Budget/Voting Information.

PLEASE NOTE:
All voting takes place in the elementary schools. There is NO voting at the high school or middle schools.

PTA, community comes to aid of Shaker Road playground

Shaker Road Elementary students returned to school this fall to a newly renovated playground called Turtle Town thanks to the efforts of the PTA, community volunteers and business donors. The PTA raised more than \$35,000 for new, much needed playground equipment and an Imagination Station. The district, PTA members, and volunteers from Miracle Playgrounds and IBEW Local 97 (National Grid), spent two days installing the long awaited equipment during the summer.

"The children have been extremely excited," said Amy Martin, PTA Playground Committee Chair. "They are happy the wait is over."

Students also played a significant role in helping to design the playground, from picking out the slides to participating in a "Name That Playground" contest.

"2007 has been overly busy with fundraising," Martin added, "but it has all been worth it. We are truly grateful to our community for its support."

The Shaker Road PTA, teachers, staff and students, would like to thank the following sponsors: Community Foundation for the Capital Region Standish Family Fund, Community Resource FCU, Stewarts Shops, National Grid, Tech Valley Homes, Outback Steakhouse, Hannaford, Key Bank, First Niagara Bank, Wal*Mart, Anthony Guicciardo at ReMax and Colonie Block and Supply.



PTA Playground Committee Chair Amy Martin puts the finishing touches on the project.

School property tax impact

Annual School Bus Purchase Proposition — \$500,500

Estimated tax rate increase Year 1 (Per \$1,000 of Assessed Value)

	Colonie	Niskayuna	Guilderland
Homestead	\$0.020931	\$0.022721	\$0.015261
Non-Homestead	\$0.025268	\$0.027907	\$0.019081

... School bus vote

Continued from page 1

- \$15,500 for the purchase of one, 5-passenger minivan.

After receiving an estimated \$19,000 trade-in value on buses that will be taken out of service, the total cost is to the district for the seven new vehicles would be \$500,500.

The district also is eligible to receive 52 percent of the purchase in state aid making the district's net cost \$269,070. The money would be borrowed over a five-year period. The cost to South Colonie property owners would be about 2 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value if the bus proposition is approved. (See complete tax rate chart above).



Rudy Ruettiger signs autographs after speaking to and encouraging students on a visit this fall.

Real 'Rudy' retells story of courage and perseverance during South Colonie visit

(This article was featured on Capital News Channel 9)

"Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!"

It was the chant heard around the field of Notre Dame University years ago, on the Hollywood movie screen, and at Colonie Central High School this fall. The classic tale of the underdog, walk-on Notre Dame football player Rudy Ruettiger, first featured in a blockbuster motion picture, was retold to South Colonie students during two character education assemblies.

The historic play on the football field was made in just seconds time, but his courage to go against the odds made his story timeless.

"It's your inside out that counts," Ruettiger told an overflow crowd gathered in the CCHS auditorium. "It's your heart. It's your desire. It's your vision."

The real "Rudy" was invited to South Colonie to tell his story to students and staff, and to show them how far a guy can go, even if he starts out with everything against him. That included no money, not being a great athlete and achieving just average grades.

"Those are all excuses," he explained. "I had to change priorities, change habits, and change my whole perspective on how I was gonna go for my dream."

Soon he ended up heads and shoulders above the rest. "Greatness is about being your best in your moment," Ruettiger added. "How you have an attitude in your moment. That's what's great because we all have the opportunity to do that."

And for the students gathered to hear him speak, meeting the man was a real life lesson in overcoming challenges, on the field, or off.

Perhaps the next underdog to overcome the odds is in this room today, he said.

"Maybe it's just changing their life. Maybe it's about being a better mother, better sister, better brother," Ruettiger said.

But if the people from Colonie ever do forget their friend from Notre Dame, there is always something they can do to remind them...

"Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!"

Sex offender notice

The Colonie Police Department provides our schools with a list of the names and addresses of Level 2 and 3 convicted sex offenders living in the South Colonie Central School District.

Those lists are now kept in a binder at each school and the District Office and can be viewed during normal school hours or by contacting the Colonie Police Department. A signature is required. Pages can be copied for 25 cents each. Information is also readily available on the Colonie Town Police web site at www.colonie.com/police, the district web site at www.southcolonieschools.org and the New York State Sex Registered Sex Offender web site at <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us>.

Free & reduced meals

The South Colonie Central School District participates in the National School Lunch Program providing nutritious meals for students free or at a reduced price of 25 cents. Free or reduced priced meals are provided daily based on household size and income. All information is kept strictly confidential.

To see whether your family qualifies for this program, all you need to do is complete an application available at your child's school or contact the South Colonie Food Service Department at 869-3576. You will be notified within a few days if you qualify for the program.

New tax rate slightly lower than expected

The South Colonie Board of Education set a school tax rates for the 2007-08 year of \$21.36 per \$1,000 assessed value – a slightly lower increase than first estimated prior to the budget vote last spring.

Tax rates published prior to the May 15th vote were only estimates. At that time, the district estimated a school property tax increase for South Colonie residents of 4.12 percent. But equalization rates and final assessments set over the summer by New York State reduced that estimated increase for residential property owners to 4.11 percent.

The actual tax rate for homestead property in South Colonie for 2007-08 is \$21.36 per \$1000 assessed valuation, an increase of 84 cents per \$1,000 over last year's school tax rate of \$20.52 per \$1,000. The Town of Colonie non-homestead tax rate for this year is \$25.79 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For a complete chart of tax rates visit the web site at www.southcolonieschools.org.

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Saddlewood kicks off Pre-Kindergarten program



South Colonie expanded its Universal Pre-Kindergarten program to Saddlewood Elementary School this fall — making it the second UPK program in the district with Roessville Elementary.

Go Home Early Drill Nov. 9

On Friday, November 9th, South Colonie Schools will send its students home 15 minutes early to test its Emergency Management Plan. The "Go Home Early Drill" is required once a year by the New York State Education Department. The purpose of the early dismissal drill is to test the effectiveness of the transportation and communications systems in the event of an emergency. Copies of the Emergency Management Plan are located in the Principal's Office of each school, and at the District Office, 102 Loralee Drive, Albany.

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