



Staten Island Advance

BREAKING NEWS ALL DAY ON SILIVE.COM

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Parents of quintuplets, Jamie Ferrante, 31, and Kevin, 34, speak during a news conference at Staten Island University Hospital.

BABIES, YOU'RE THE GREATEST!

Days-old quintuplets are the star attraction at University Hospital

By DEBORAH YOUNG
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

They are already a media sensation, and they haven't even made their photographic debut.

The tiny quintuplets born Saturday — now cosseted in the neonatal intensive care unit at Staten Island University Hospital, assisted by tubes no bigger than stirring straws — drew camera crews and other media from across the city and beyond yesterday, eager to hear more about the fantastic birth.

Their mother, Jamie Ferrante, 31, looked more elated than exhausted as she was wheeled to the press conference at the Ocean Breeze hospital, and broke into

tears describing the joy of being a mom of four girls and one little boy, all at once.

"The delivery was amazing," she said in respect of the Caesarean section she underwent 27 and a half weeks into her pregnancy at 1:30 a.m. Saturday, a delivery orchestrated by a team of 49 physicians, nurses and specialists, who said they had practiced before the delivery to ensure everything went smoothly.

"I didn't get to see them or hear them when they were coming out; they were whisked away so quickly," Mrs. Ferrante said.

The siblings, who weighed between 1.8 and 2 pounds at birth, are doing well, doctors said. In fact, the smallest, Amanda Frances, was the first of the group to be taken off a res-

SEE BABIES, PAGE A 7

Mom 'not a monster,' kin says

Son she's accused of killing was home-schooled, kept from dad for 3 years

By PHIL HELSEL and JEFF HARRELL
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

A day after a stone-faced Melissa Sekulski was charged in the beating death of her 10-year-old son, the Mariners Harbor woman broke down in tears yesterday during a brief court appearance in Manhattan.

REPORTED FIRST ON SILIVE.COM YESTERDAY, 5:45 P.M.

The contrast in court wasn't the only one that emerged as a picture of the accused killer took shape: She kept meticulous records of her son's education in a filthy, roach-infested apartment and found it impossible to refuse sweets to the child she allegedly beat to death Friday night.

"That child was her life," said Ms. Sekulski's older brother, Ogie Sekulski, one of several family members

at court yesterday. "What they're saying about her is not at all true. They're saying she's a monster."

Ms. Sekulski, 30, is accused of torturing her 5-foot-7-inch, 250-pound son, Jaquan Porter, for three years, thrashing him most fre-

quently with a belt and belt buckle. He died Friday night after having his head slammed at least twice into a wall in their Grandview Avenue apartment.

She reportedly told a fellow inmate after her arrest Saturday, "I just lost it."

Yesterday, Ms. Sekulski dissolved into tears at Manhattan Family Court, where she answered a warrant that

SEE MOM, PAGE A 12

CALIFORNIA EYES TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SOLUTION SHOT DOWN IN NYC



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rush hour traffic travels the Bay Bridge as the sun sets in San Francisco. America's second-most-congested city could become the first to institute congestion pricing to reduce downtown traffic, improve the environment and raise money for further transit fixes.

San Franciscans gag on congestion-pricing

Denizens of ultra-progressive city draw the line at pay-to-drive; motorists may lay out \$6

By MARIA L. La GANGA
LOS ANGELES TIMES

SAN FRANCISCO — You've just driven from Oakland to San Francisco across the Bay Bridge and shelled out \$4 for the toll. You'll be dinged upward of \$30 to park for the day in the city. And, if city officials have their way, motorists could be charged \$3 to drive into downtown San Francisco during peak commute hours and another \$3 to

leave. Such a plan might sound like a slam-dunk here in the first American metropolis to ban plastic shopping bags — where officials considered tapping pet feces for fuel instead of sending it to the landfill, the mayor banned the use of city funds to buy bottled water (too much garbage), and the bicycle

lobby is a force to be reckoned with. But reaction to the plan's recent rollout has ranged from lukewarm to downright hostile.

Even Jose Luis Moscovich, executive director of San Francisco County Transportation Authority, acknowledged at a recent City Hall forum that "we're all nervous about it."

Moscovich is the man who said that "tens of thousands of additional car trips in San Francisco" share a "common thread" with "terrorism, climate change, the mortgage crisis, Hurricane Katrina."

SEE TRAFFIC, PAGE A 4

HOLIDAY CHANGES

The Advance will not publish Thursday, New Year's Day, and as a result some of your favorite Thursday features will appear on different days. The weekly Shores section and the Homes section will appear tomorrow. AWE, our weekly entertainment section, will run Friday.



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/RICH KANE

IN SPORTS: JETS FIRE 'MANGENIUS' AFTER 3 SEASONS

Eric Mangini, dubbed "Mangeni" in better times, had the New York Jets in first place a month ago, a special season shaping up for a franchise sorely in need of one. But four losses in five games dashed the Jets' Super Bowl hopes with a thud, and cost the coach his job. See Page B 1.

HEADLINES

TOP NEWS FOR TODAY

HAMAS DEFIANT, HITS ISRAEL WITH ROCKETS

Palestinian militants send a deadly barrage of missiles deep into Israel, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza. Page A 10

WEATHER WATCHER

Jeff Chambers of New Brighton



Chance of light snow showers overnight

COMPLETE REPORT ON A 16

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A litany of losses for Staten Island

We specially remember 22 lives from among 3,500 obituaries

By KELLIANN VOLSARIO and STEPHANIE SLEPIAN
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

In 2008, the Advance chronicled the lives of approximately 3,500 people with ties to Staten Island on our obituary pages. Every one of them touched somebody. Among them, however, are nearly two dozen who stand out for their heroism, their sacrifice, their commitment to the community.

Some made their contributions long ago; others were cut down in their prime, taken unexpectedly, their work left undone, their voids difficult to fill.

Two wore their city's uniform: one his nation's. As the year draws to a close, we remember 22 of them.



JAN. 3: FIRE LT. JOHN MARTINSON

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Fire Lt. John H. Martinson's love of the FDNY was second only to his love for his family. A one-time police officer, he followed in the footsteps of his father when he became a firefighter in 1993.

"Family was the most important thing to him. Family always came first," said his



JUNE 22: FRANK POWERS

wife, Jessica. She was pregnant with the couple's second child when her 40-year-old husband died while fighting a fast-moving fire in a Brooklyn high-rise.

JAN. 14: HYUN SOOK (SUSIE) BEIDEL, WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT

Susie Beidel, a survivor of the Korean War, was instrumental in establishing the



SEPT. 4: MICHAEL J. FORTUNATO

Staten Island Korean War Veterans Memorial in Sunnyside, and for having the name of the Richmond Parkway changed to the Korean War Veterans Parkway. She was 72.

"She had a hand in quite a few things," said Joseph Calabria, commander of the Cpl. Allan F. Kivlehan Chap-

SEE LOSS, PAGE A 11

Let's get this party started

Restaurateurs dangling deals at 11th hour to lure New Year's revelers

By MAURA YATES
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Staten Islanders still want to see the ball drop — it's just that they don't want to drop a lot of dough this year. But there's a silver lining: New Year's Eve party promoters are going all out to tempt folks from their recliners.

"We're trying to give people a better deal. People are hurting," said Kim Beckett, owner of Burrito Bar in West Brighton. "If the economy was better, we probably would have charged a little more."

SEE PARTY, PAGE A 5