

# The ADVOCATE

## Students arrested in SHS prank

By Jeff Morganteen  
STAFF WRITER

STAMFORD — They spray-painted walls, spread shampoo on floors and posted pornographic pictures in classrooms.

Police said it was a senior prank gone too far, and it led to the arrests of three Stamford High School students.

Police said the first and second floors were vandalized with Silly String, spray

### Silly String, spray paint used in early morning vandalism

paint, glitter, marbles and more.

School custodians discovered the damage early Monday, according to the police department's Youth Bureau. School security officers linked it to three students, who were charged with burglary and criminal mischief.

Police did not name the

students because they are under 18 and being treated as juveniles. Two are boys and one is a girl, police said.

When custodians walked into Stamford High at 6:15 a.m. Monday, they found Silly String sprayed in the stairwells and halls on the first and second floors. Smiley faces were scrawled on

the doors of the main office, and profanity and peace signs were on the walls. Custodians called police at 6:30 a.m.

Surveillance cameras helped Stamford High security officers identify the students, police said.

Some of the graffiti that was spray-painted referred to the class of 2009, said

Sarah Arnold, spokeswoman for the school district. The vandalism occurred at 2 a.m. Monday, Arnold said.

Custodians and painters finished cleaning by the end of the school day, focusing first on the slippery floors, police said.

Gerber Segura, 18, a Stamford High senior, said he noticed smiley faces and

peace signs scribbled in marker on the second floor.

Secretary Fran DeCarlo said the school mostly was cleaned up when she got to work at 8 a.m.

"Someone said there was vandalism and told me to be careful walking around because it was slippery," DeCarlo said.

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Joann Borchetta, principal of St. Cecilia's in Stamford, has been named a National Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

## Best in class

### St. Cecilia's scores national acclaim

By Wynne Parry  
STAFF WRITER

STAMFORD — This year, a small school is getting big honors.

St. Cecilia's, a Catholic elementary school on Newfield Avenue, has been nominated as a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School by the federal government, based on standardized math and reading test scores.

And the principal, Joann Borchetta, is one of three Catholic school principals in the United States to be honored as a National Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

The school, which enrolls about 300 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, will learn in the fall whether it has earned Blue Ribbon status, Borchetta said. St. Cecilia's was nominated because students scored in the top 10 percent in the nation on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

Borchetta, finishing her 21st year at St. Cecilia's, first was nominated by the National Catholic Educational Association to represent New England. She



Borchetta talks in the hallway after school with fourth-grade students, from left, Emma DeRubeis, Marc Pinto, Allena Cataldo and Owen Kilian. The federal government has nominated St. Cecilia's as a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School.

then was chosen as one of three of the 11 regional Catholic principals to join private and public school principals who are expected to be honored in October.

"Educationally, she is the tops," said Christine Green, of Stamford, a St. Cecilia's parent. "She absolutely knows where the kids are. She is up on the lat-

est trends, yet she is also very rooted in the old academics."

Borchetta is about more than academics, Green said.

"When I drop my kids off in the morning, I feel as if they are as emotionally and physically safe as they are with me," she said.

Borchetta makes the rounds

each morning and at the end of the school day, checking to make sure everything is in its place.

"I am in very early," she said. "I won't tell you what time, but I start accepting calls at 7."

On Monday, after school let out, she asked nearly every student she encountered about their homework.

"Some say it's done, and I say, 'How could you finish at 2:30?'" she said. "That's not possible."

In the economic recession, some parents are not sending their children to private schools, opting for less-expensive Catholic schools, Borchetta said.

Tuition at King Low Heywood Thomas, a private school in Stamford, ran as high as \$30,200 this year, for example. At St. Cecilia's, tuition costs \$5,100 a year for families who receive letters from their pastors certifying that they belong to a Diocese of Bridgeport parish. Families without certification pay \$7,000.

St. Cecilia's is one of three Catholic elementary schools in Stamford.

— Staff Writer Wynne Parry can be reached at wynne.parry@scni.com or 964-2263.

## Report shows state's costs in film credit

By Brian Lockhart  
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — As lawmakers continue to wrestle with crafting a two-year budget, a new analysis is likely to renew debate regarding the state's three-year-old film tax credit program.

Compiled by the state Commission on Culture & Tourism, the confidential draft report obtained by The Advocate details the money spent in Connecticut to make dozens of feature films, television shows, documentaries, commercials and video games here and what it cost the state in tax credits to lure those productions.

At first glance, it appears the state is experiencing a net loss, issuing more than \$113.2 million worth of credits to an industry that has invested about one third of that — more than \$41.5 million — into Connecticut's economy for everything from car rentals and plumbing contractors to food, lodging and floral services.

"This can't be allowed to stand," state Sen. Eileen Daily, D-Westbrook, said when told about the figures Monday.

Daily, co-chairman of the legislature's Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, had asked the tourism commission earlier this year to provide a thorough examination of the tax credits' effect but said she has yet to see the analysis.

George Norfleet, director of the tourism commission's film division, said it would be an oversimplification to judge the program

*"This can't be allowed to stand."*

Sen. Eileen Daily  
D-Westbrook

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## New testimony revealed in '05 cruise incident

By Debra Friedman  
STAFF WRITER

Four years after Greenwich resident George Smith IV went missing on a honeymoon cruise, his widow continues to maintain the incident may have been an accident. However, testimony unsealed Monday reveals that one of Jennifer Hagel Smith's own attorneys believes Smith died as the result of foul play.

"My belief, I think that there was foul play. I've always thought that," said attorney James Walker, the maritime attorney for Hagel Smith.

"And as I go through this case, I'm concerned that there is foul play. I don't believe in coincidences."

Smith was on a Royal Caribbean Mediterranean cruise in 2005 when he went missing. His body was never found, although there were blood stains on an overhang below the couple's private balcony aboard the Brill-

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## Case closed: Stamford inspector, 81, retires

By John Nickerson  
STAFF WRITER

STAMFORD — At 81, Philip O'Grady is the oldest and longest-serving inspector in all of Connecticut's 13 state's attorneys' offices.

Working with prosecutors, inspectors look over evidence, arrange for subpoenas, interview witnesses and go to the

most serious crime scenes. They also can make arrests.

O'Grady has worked in the Stamford courthouse for 28 years.

When he retires at the end of the month, he will end a half-century career in law enforcement.

It began in 1955 with the Norwalk Police Department,

where O'Grady worked for 22 years. In 1977, he took a job as a prosecutor's investigator at the Norwalk courthouse.

When the Stamford-Norwalk Judicial District was created in 1981, State's Attorney Eugene Callahan promoted O'Grady to inspector and moved him to the Stamford courthouse, where for a time,

he was the prosecutors' sole investigator.

"I knew him by reputation as a square shooter who was well organized and a good investigator," said Callahan, now retired. "If you give him an assignment, you don't need to tell him how to do it, because it isn't necessary — and

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