Priest works with kids despite lifetime ban
Advocates for sex abuse victims decry Newark archishop's approval

By Mark Hullister

Six years ago, to avoid retrial on charges that he groped a teenage boy, the Rev. Michael Pugliese entered a rehabilitation program, underwent counseling for sex offenders and signed a binding agreement that would dictate the remainder of his life as a Roman Catholic priest.

Pugliese would not work in any position involving children, the agreement with the Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office stipulates. He would have no affiliation with youth groups. He would not attend youth retreats. He would not hear the confessions of minors.

But Pugliese has openly done all of those things for the past several years through an unaffiliated association with a Monmouth County church. St. Mary’s Parish in Colts Neck, The Star-Ledger found.

He has attended weekend youth retreats at Marboro and on the shores of Lake Hopatcong in Mount Arlington, parishioners say. Pugliese also has traveled with members of St. Mary’s youth group on an annual pilgrimage to Canada. At all three locations, he has heard confessions from minors behind closed doors.

What’s more, he has done so with the approval of New Jersey’s highest-ranking Catholic official: Newark Bishop Free H. Payne.

“I’m never going to be the dancer I was, but I would have never become the person I am.”
—Evan Ruggiero, who lost his leg to cancer three years ago

His JOYOUS DANCE OF LIFE

The kid was alone on the empty rehearsal stage. It was midnight and everyone else was gone. He wanted it that way. He set up his computer to record what would happen next, no matter what it was.

He sat in a chair and put a tap shoe on his left foot, calmly detached his right leg and stood up to walk. He then took the blue metal post made by his prosthetics craftsman and connected it to the socket where his knee used to be.

“My leg go,” Evan Ruggiero says. “Then he stood. A little shaky, like a newborn colt at first. And then he danced. Just a few steps. A little cut-and-dried. Then a few more. He left those bones to the stronger sound, but he was never getting what he wanted out of the naked tip of his hollow post, too. He was tap dancing.

After the surgeries to save his cancerous leg, after the amputation, after 16 months of chemotherapy to stop the cancer from spreading, and more surgery to remove eight lung tumors, the kid had tap-dancing again. Just like he promised. His parents, his doctors, his friends at Montclair State. Most importantly, himself.

“I’m a dancer,” he’d been doing since he was 5, when he saw his sister dance and get competitive.

“It was like the classic story from ‘Chronicle Lane’, ‘I can do that’,” Ruggiero said. “And here we are... 17 years later.”

Mark Di Bono

NJ.com staff photographer

Mark Di Bono/Staff Photographer

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Priest thought he was sexting 16-year-old boy

In reality, it was a sting set up by 2 young men who allege cleric harassed them

By Mark Whitten

The text messages read as if they were ripped from a pornographic novel.

Matthew Bollinger quizzed his hunting partner about sex videos provided for details about a recent arrest, described sexual acts and encouraged mutual masturbation. He also repeatedly asked to meet. "Promise me you will never breath a word of this to anyone — ever," he wrote.

Bollinger had good reason for discretion.

He is a priest of the Diocese of Trenton while exchanging more than 1,250 text messages over four weeks last year, he thought he was talking to a 16-year-old boy.

Bollinger, at the time an assistant pastor at St. Alphonsus Church in Jackson and a noneducation teacher at the parish school, was the target of an elaborate sting by a Catholic University of America graduate who says the priest sexually harassed him for years.

Timothy Schmidt, now 21 and a resident of Washington, D.C., said he was moved to action after his first complaint about Bollinger in 2011 resulted in what he characterized as a slap on the wrist by Bishop David M. O'Connell.

Schmidt is one of five young men who provided The Star-Ledger with similar accounts of harassment and sexual abuse by the priest. Four of the five were in their late teens or early 20s when Bollinger began inappropriate and persistent sexual dialogue with them, they said. The fifth was in his late 20s.

The sting, initiated by Schmidt and carried out through the use of a Google Voice account, purportedly served its purpose.

After Schmidt forwarded transcripts of the text messages and other materials to O'Connell in August 2013, the bishop suspended Bollinger from the parish, placed him on administrative leave and later asked him to resign. Bollinger later submitted his resignation to the star- Ledger in September 2014.

But for more than a year, O'Connell refused to file charges with S.J. police, reasons why the priest had been pulled, or even that the diocese had received reports for violent

times of clergy sex abuse call a flagrant

House votes to delay ObamaCare for a year

GOP-led move likely to result in shutdown

The Republican-led U.S. House voted to attach a one-year delay of "ObamaCare" to a must-pass spending bill, dramatically rais- ing the likelihood of a partial gov- ernment shutdown Oct. 1.

The 231-196 vote early this morning, mostly along party lines, puts the House on a colla- tion course with Senate Demo- crats and President Obama, who say they won't accept Republi- can's conditions for keeping the government operating. It is the fourth time in three years that lawmakers have taken the United States to the brink of a federal crisis.

\* In New Jersey, effects of a shutdown would grow. Page 3

The vote marks a sharp turn for House Speaker John Boish- ner and other Republican lead- ers, who earlier resisted taking a hard line on Obama's 2016 health-care law until they gave in to the demands of a few dozen tea party conservatives.

"Let's take a year and perfect, if you can this bill," said Representa- tive Hal Rogers, a Kentucky Repub- lican. "To say that what we've been working on is shut down the government is just not true."

The action now returns to the Senate, where Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, said "ObamaCare" will reject the House amendment. He called the Republican plan to "permanently" remove the health-care law "punishment."

A last-minute deal before Oct. 1 is still achievable though time is running out. One possible move is for both chambers to pass a short-term funding -measure.

\* SHUTDOWN, PAGE 3

ELECTION 2013

A rebel with a cause and, now, hope

The naysayers be damned, Loegeing is running to win

By Ted Warren

Steve Loegeing was 35 points down to Newark Mayor Cory Booker a few weeks ago, but having a good time.

His campaign for the U.S. Senate seemed a absurdity sort of affair, not far removed from the limit he ran when he would go home to hock, knocking on doors seeking votes to become mayor of Bogota, the his- toric Bergen County town he still called home, and where he once proposed ban- ning Spanish-language billboards.

Surrendered to a small crowd of true believers with a devotion toward their can- didate bordering on religious zeal (even living at his house, which has become the de facto campaign headquarters), the dis- carded conservatives was raising money at gun ranges. He does a lot of gun ranges.

He went to Newark to shake hands and break Booker's Democratic opponent in the upcoming Oct. 18 special election to fill the seat of the late Sen. Frank Lautenberg (DN.J.). He called for the democratization of the Senate, a seat short of Obama- care. And he expounded admiration for tea party-phenom Ted Cruz, the supernova sen- ator from Texas released those days even by McGILLOP, PAGE 6

FRIDAY OCTOBER 4

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[First Floor, 1019 Broad Street, Newark, NJ](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/friday-october-11-930-am-200-pm-registration-10106007867)

Register online at saferaftersandy.org or call 609-695-7100, Ext. 305

WEC is a coalition of organizations that serves communities affected by hurricanes and superstorms, and that has expanded its mission to include helping protect NJ workers, families, and communities.

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**Safe Haven**

By Temperance Smith

As the sun set on the sandy beaches of Bradley Beach, New Jersey, a group of volunteers gathered to help a community in need. Many individuals, including children, came together to support one another and make a positive impact.

The volunteers were actively cleaning up the area, removing debris and helping to rebuild homes. Despite the challenges of recovery, everyone was working hard to ensure that the community could return to its normal state.

Onlookers expressed their gratitude to the volunteers, acknowledging their tireless efforts. The scene was one of hope and resilience, as the community continued to work towards a brighter future.

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**Theft at Newark School of the Arts**

By Eliza Thomas

A theft at Newark School of the Arts has caused concern among students and faculty. The incident took place during a day when the school was closed due to a snow day.

According to witnesses, a group of individuals entered the school through an unlocked door, causing widespread disturbances. It is unclear what items were taken or if any surveillance footage exists to help identify the suspects.

Students and faculty are calling for increased security measures to prevent future incidents. The school administration has assured the community that they are taking the matter seriously and will do everything in their power to ensure the safety of their students and staff.

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**Neighbors Unite Against Homeless**

By Sarah Davis

Residents of a neighborhood in Newark have come together to address the issue of homeless individuals congregating in their area. The community has been proactive in seeking solutions to this growing problem.

Several stakeholders, including local politicians, law enforcement officials, and non-profit organizations, have collaborated to develop strategies to address this issue. The community has been encouraged to stay informed and engaged in these discussions.

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**Catholic Church: Whistleblowers Refused Access to Priest’s CEMC Records**

By John B. Smith

The Catholic Church has refused access to the personal information of a former priest, according to whistleblower allegations. The priest, who was accused of sexual misconduct, has been retired from the diocese.

Whistleblowers have been advocating for transparency and accountability within the Church. Their efforts have been met with resistance, as the Church continues to defend its handling of sexual abuse allegations.

While the Church has claimed that it is protecting the privacy of its members, these allegations have raised concerns about the Church’s commitment to justice and accountability. The situation remains under investigation, and further developments are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.
The Star-Ledger

Erik DeFanti

In a recent interview with a group of people visiting the shrine from the Diocese of Trenton, saying that Riedling told them he was teaching sex education to middle school children at the St. Anthony par

“he would say how physically muscular they were for their ages and how some even avoided the raised alarm bells.”

Then in the spring of 2012, Schmalz was assigned to outpatients counseling after first telling them that Schmalz and Ryan were told through an intermed

“the Catholic University professor — that Riedling was the least of their worries. Both men said they consid

The two friends said they weren’t looking to have Riedling charged. They said they wanted to prove to di

The Google Voice account Schmalz and Ryan created allowed them to send real
details in the format of a chat, with dates and timestamps.

The first two weeks, Riedling was cautious. “Something’s not right,” the priest wrote at 10:24 p.m. Jul

“Trotted the Google Voice account Schmalz and Ryan created to allow them to send real-time messages in

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Hider, priests, secret pasts

At least seven alleged sexual predators have lived in a retirement home next door to two schools. No one ever warned the neighbors.

By Mark Mueller, Star-Ledger Staff

Norberto Nierras says he saw the man with the shock of white hair all the time along Home Ave., a residential block that teens with children from the Catholic elementary and high schools a few hundred yards away.

The man, Nierras said, came and went as he pleased, stealing the Heatherfield neighborhood or sitting on a bench outside the free-story building he called home: St. John Vianney Residence for Retired Priests.

What Nierras didn’t know is that the man, the Rev. Msgr. Peter Cheplak, had been accused of drugging and molesting four teenage boys in the 1970s and 1980s. Or that the Archdiocese of Newark found the claims credible enough to remove him from ministry in 2000. Cheplak, who denied the allegations, is, to one of at least seven alleged sexual predators quietly placed in the Rutherford retirement home in the past decade, The Star-Ledger found.

Nick Del Duca, the archdiocese spokesman, said the archdiocese was not aware of the man.

Some lived there a short time. Others have stayed for years. Neighbors said they were unaware of the man’s presence until told by a report.

“Parents need to be made aware of this,” said Nierras, 25, who has lived across the street from St. John Vianney for more than three years. “There are kids around this area constantly. I’m pretty sure some people would be upset. I’m upset.”

Eleven years after the nuncio’s bishops contributed the money to save St. John Vianney, residents of the former St. John Vianney Residence for Retired Priests in Rutherford harbor several accused of sex abuse.

Professor reflects on a career well-spent, one dinner at a time

By Kelly Hendry

Standing among hundreds of guests gathered for a colleague’s retirement party a few years ago, someone asked Shoco Lacott one his plans for his pending retirement from Stevens Institute of Technology.

Would the veteran professor hold a similar bash to celebrate his 40-year teaching career? Lacott immediately shook his head.

“Without even stopping, I thought. Why would I want to do that when I could have 100 retirement dinners?”

Lacott said. So the humanists professor came up with a plan. He would celebrate the end of his career by tracking down 170 of his former students and treating them individually to dinner.

After five years — and 86 dinners — Lacott is nearing his goal. His tour of his past has taken him to restaurants in Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma and every corner of New Jersey.

Along the way, the former professor helped answer the question that nagged many aging teachers: Did I make a difference?

Lacott said he found many of the young adults who filled his class- room from the 1980s to the 2000s had launched successful careers, had families and had fond memories of his classes. Many could still recall lessons learned in his social sciences course.

“The amazing thing is it’s so obvious to see how much they have seen them yesterday,” Lacott said. Lacott, a Bergen County native, began teaching on Stevens Institute of Technology’s campus in the mid-1960s after he received his doctorate in in human development.

The job was not easy, he said. But he taught humanities courses and was an active and well-known figure on campus.

Electors turn to choice between 2 Jersey candidates

Christie and Buono urge opposite paths

By: Joyce Korman

If Gov. Chris Christie wins Tuesday’s election and you make a wish, will you wake up in a day or can you sleep easy?

If Barbara Buono wins, Tea Party will not be a thrill ride for you.

If Christie wins, and you are a public employee, prepare for more unannounced re- ported. If you have to push hard to keep healthful annuities or even sick days. He also wants to see changes to the civil service retirement, which gives many thousands of public employees in New Jersey are hired, promoted, and fired.

If Buono wins, unions who supported her in her election fight likely have a stronger governor.

If Christie wins, you may see him on TV even more than you do now. But instead of a hospita- lity-minded chief he could be standing in an Iowa cornfield, shaking hands in New Hampshire or making the case in Southern for why he deserves the GOP nomination for president.

Two different Jersey’s are at stake when the polls open. Here, in this place is a run- down of just what choices vot- ers will be making the day they pull the lever.

For starters, much like the stark differences in the US Senate. Not even Booker and Steve Langone, to say nothing of Sens. Menahem and alaids doesn’t really say it all.

The Republican governor and his waiting challenger couldn’t stand further apart on most issues. They are sharply divided on same-sex marriage, around the state’s economy, veterans, public education and control gun violence.

Christie and Buono as a tool of the SBA and pub- licSF schools, and very different from former Gov. Jon Corzine. The governor twice asked her if she regretted having come to New Jersey, and fees 150 times, and twice got no answer.

For his part, the contender’s ADAM CARMAN, Pat sector.

WINTER SESSION

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Priests

The Law of God has no respect for persons.

The Rev. Michael Fague appears in court in May on charges of violating a court-sanctioned order that he refrain from working with children. He continued to attend youth retreats.

The Rev. Matthew Riedling was suspended from his position as pastor of the St. Mary Church in Voorhees, New Jersey, in 2002 after abuse allegations.

Three court cases involving child abuse by priests were settled in April.

The Rev. Richard Chabot, right, in a suit and tie, is shown in a photograph with his accuser.

The late Rev. Eugene Heydrich, who adjudged six men for same sex male prostitution, lived at the St. John's Rectory in Camden.

The Rev. Robert Kinsey, who moved to New Jersey from Texas in 1999, is shown in a photograph with his brother.

The recently arrested Rev. Robert Kinsey was shown in a photograph with his accuser.

The Rev. Robert Kinsey, who was charged with multiple counts of sexual misconduct, was shown in a photograph with his accuser.

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