

A busy, busy weekend in Middletown

Classic races, film festival at Paramount are big draws

By Richard J. Bayne
Times Herald-Record

MIDDLETOWN — Organizers at Saturday's Junior Classic events at Middletown High School were thrilled that they had three Olympians stopping by to encourage the kids — long jumper Bob Beamon, and distance runners Frank Shorter and John Trautmann.

The Junior Classic, which featured a host of track and field events, kicked off Classic Weekend in Middletown, which culminates with Sunday's races. After Saturday's events finished up around noon, organizers said about 200 kids participated.

The Junior Classic hit the starting blocks as Middletown's fourth year of the Hoboken International Film Festival, which opened Friday night, moved into its first day of screenings. Films will be shown from noon to 10 p.m. during the festival's

seven days. The film festival typically draws as many as 15,000 people to Middletown during its run, HIFF Chairman Ken Del Vecchio said.

Longtime Middletown school board member Ed Estrada, who was helping out at the Junior Classic on Saturday, said it's "awesome" that so many people will be coming out to see what Middletown has to offer, both for the Classic events and the film festival.

Mayor Joe DeStefano, who was at Friday's HIFF opening at the city-owned Paramount Theatre, said neither he nor the city's public safety officials were worried about handling the influx of visitors for a weekend, jam-packed with a road race and a film festival.

"We've got it all covered," the mayor said. "These are fun things that don't require big crowd control. We want people to enjoy their time here."



Officials said Jonah Gorevic set a world record for the mile for 12-year-olds during Saturday's Kids Classic at Middletown High School.

Danielle Schloemer of Middletown, who had three kids, ranging in age from 3 to 9, participating in Saturday's Junior Classic, said it was her second year. "It's a great event for kids," said Schloemer, whose husband, Mike, was planning to run the adult Classic on Sunday.

Many visitors raved about Middletown High School's high-tech, International Association of Athletics



Olympic long jump champion Bob Beamon autographs a sneaker for Robert Alexis, a 2015 Middletown High School graduate who just finished his freshman year at Buffalo State. Alexis competed in long jump, triple jump and high jump at Buffalo State. PHOTOS BY RICHARD J. BAYNE/TIMES HERALD-RECORD

Federations-certified track, including 12-year-old runner Jonah Gorevic of Rye, who broke the record for the 12-year-old mile on the track Saturday. "It felt just right," Gorevic said. "It's a fast track."

Over at the Paramount, many moviegoers and industry types who hadn't been to

the theater before admired its iconic style, with its 1,100 plush-red seats and huge stage that goes back to the heyday of moviegoing. The city-owned theater opened in 1930.

Director John W. Galvin, who was at the festival to promote his TV pilot "Mr. Ready," which focuses on a

dad who has to take over the management of his household and his 6-year-old son, said the Paramount is "phenomenal" and he praised the festival. "This event is highly organized and well-attended," said Galvin, whose TV pilot is set to screen Wednesday.

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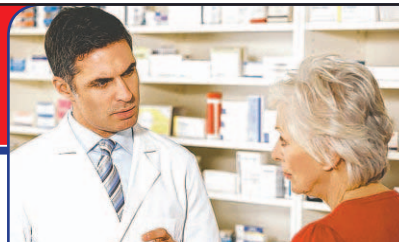


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