

# Scotch Plains NJ

## WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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2018

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### SCOTCH PLAINS NAMES 'CASA DAY'

Scotch Plains Mayor, Al Smith, and the Town Council declared December 12 to be Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County Day during a town hall ceremony held last month. The ceremony, held in Council Chambers at Municipal Hall, included a presentation of a signed proclamation. Several Scotch Plains residents who are active volunteers with CASA attended in support of the dedication, including Carmen Ayala, Jennifer Brady, Sheri Glover-Flanagan, Linda Jenkins-Davis, Geraldine Keogh (who also serves on the board of directors), Laurie Rando, and Christie Rothenberg.

Executive Director Marla Higginbotham stated, "We are so grateful to Mayor Smith and the town council for recognizing not only the crucial work of CASA advocates for Union County's foster youth, but for seeing the bigger picture. Every one of our communities has children removed from home and placed in foster care through no fault of their own, and every community has the power to stand up. If each of the twenty-one towns in Union County represented like Scotch Plains — which right now has twelve residents advocating for foster youth — just imagine what could be accomplished! Being a CASA volunteer, serving as extra eyes and ears for the judge, is meaningful, powerful, and life-changing on both sides. Thank you, Scotch Plains, for CASA Day!"

CASA of Union County recruits, trains, supervises and supports community volunteers to advocate for abused, neglected and abandoned children placed in foster homes or residential facilities. There are nearly 600 Union County children, from birth to age 21, in foster care, and the nonprofit advocates for half of these youth. Volunteers ensure children's best interests remain the priority while working toward establishing a safe, stable, and permanent home for each child. The organization's goal is to provide a CASA volunteer for every foster youth.



(above, back row, l-r) Jennifer Brady, Advocate; Ron Silver, Board Vice President, and former Advocate; Christie Rothenberg, Advocate; Linda Jenkins-Davis, Advocate; Carmen Ayala, Advocate; and Geraldine Keogh, Board Member and Advocate.  
(front row, l-r) Laurie Rando, Ambassador; Sheri Glover-Fanagan, Advocate; Marla Higginbotham, Executive Director; Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan, Development and Communications Manager and former Advocate; and Courtney Green, Recruiter, and Advocate Supervisor.



(above, l-r) Marla Higginbotham, Executive Director; Jennifer Mutch, Board President; Geraldine Keogh, Board Member; Ron Silver, Board Vice President, and former Advocate; and Mayor Al Smith reading the CASA Day proclamation.

For details on training classes in the new year or for other ways to help CASA reach every foster youth, contact Courtney: [cgreen@casaoofunioncounty.org](mailto:cgreen@casaoofunioncounty.org) or (908) 293-8136.

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## PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

*Community service organizations, schools and sports teams are encouraged to submit news of upcoming events or highlights and photos from recent events.*

**Organizations who are interested in submitting content, please email editor@rennamedia.com or call 908-858-4012**

*Scotch Plains Monthly is online at [www.rennamedia.com](http://www.rennamedia.com) like us on [facebook.com/Scotch Plains Monthly](https://www.facebook.com/ScotchPlainsMonthly)*



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## MEET MARYANNE CHRISTIANO-MISTRETTA YOUR CONTACT FOR NEWSPAPER CONTENT



*Maryanne Christiano-Mistretta*

Hello Readers!

I'm ecstatic to introduce myself as the new editor for Renna Media. It's such an honor working with Joe and Tina Renna; they are awesome!

Joe has asked me to write a little bit about myself for our readership, which is probably a great idea since I'll often be out

and about in the community.

Residing in Union County with my husband, Dennis, and our beloved cat Nicholas, my interests, besides writing and editing, include animals, music, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Writing professionally since 1995, I'm an award-winning journalist. I received my award from The NJ Society of Professional Journalists for investigative journalism. I'm also an author, public speaker, and poet (recently selected to read at the All About Eve Arts Festival at the West End Theatre in Long Branch, New Jersey).

Having a great passion for music, I've developed a unique library program called "The Learn & Listen Series" which pays homage to legendary musicians.

The two-fold presentation begins as I host, sharing a musician's biography – which I wrote – followed by actual live music from local New Jersey and New York talent. Librarians can choose from a variety of singers such as Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis Jr., John Lennon, Freddie Mercury, Johnny Cash, Janis Joplin, and David Bowie.

I'm blessed to be able to work with performers like indie recording artist Keith Beck; jazz sensation Stephen Fuller (front man for Amani);

singer/performance artist, Anna Oh; and three-time Grammy winning producer, Rob Fusari.

"Learn & Listen" also includes Jayne DiGregorio and Rich Timberlake, who work behind-the-scenes filming for an upcoming documentary.

In addition to the "Learn & Listen" series, I also lecture on "History of the Newspaper Industry," "Going, Going, Gone: What the Next Generation Won't Remember" (seniors love that one!), and there's also a healthy foodies series, which includes sampling.

Now, if you've read this far, you may be asking yourself – how can this woman work so much and still have time to edit 21 newspapers? As Joe Renna himself says – "It's not work, it's a lifestyle." I somehow get everything done ... and with a big smile on my face.

When you have a grand passion for what you do, it doesn't matter what day it is. It could be a Monday, or a Friday, and you're equally as happy. Sometimes I'm home all day working in my pajamas; other times I'm having a blast taking photos at a Winter Walk. Whether I sleep in or get up super early to attend a town meeting, it's all good. In this line of work, every day is different, and every day is exciting.

In just one month of working for Renna Media, I've attended many fun affairs and met incredible people. It brings a tear to my eye when a child cheers, "I'm gonna be in the newspaper!" after I take his or her photograph. That's what it's all about – the essence of presenting a good story to the community.

So, don't hesitate to send me your community news. We call on the arts, fundraisers, nonprofits, new businesses – anything positive that should be in your local newspaper.

Reach me at 908-858-4012, or email me at: [Editor@RennaMedia.com](mailto:Editor@RennaMedia.com)

I look forward to hearing from you!

*Maryanne Christiano-Mistretta*



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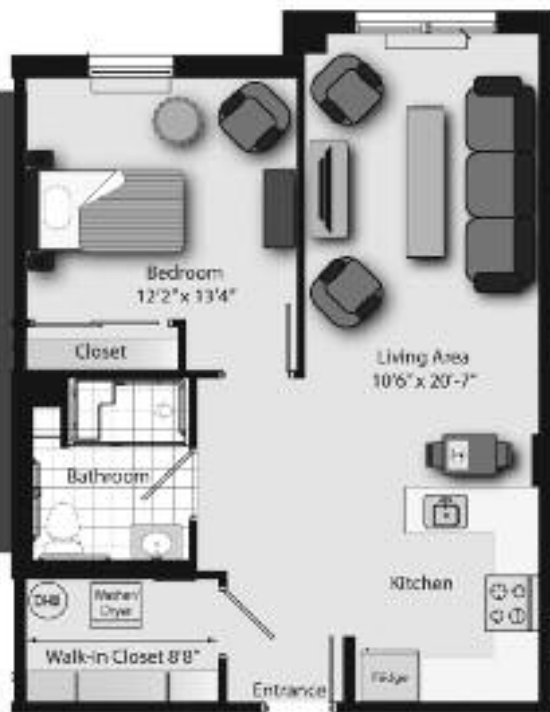
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## HIGH SCHOOL FALL SPORT'S ATHLETES RECOGNITION

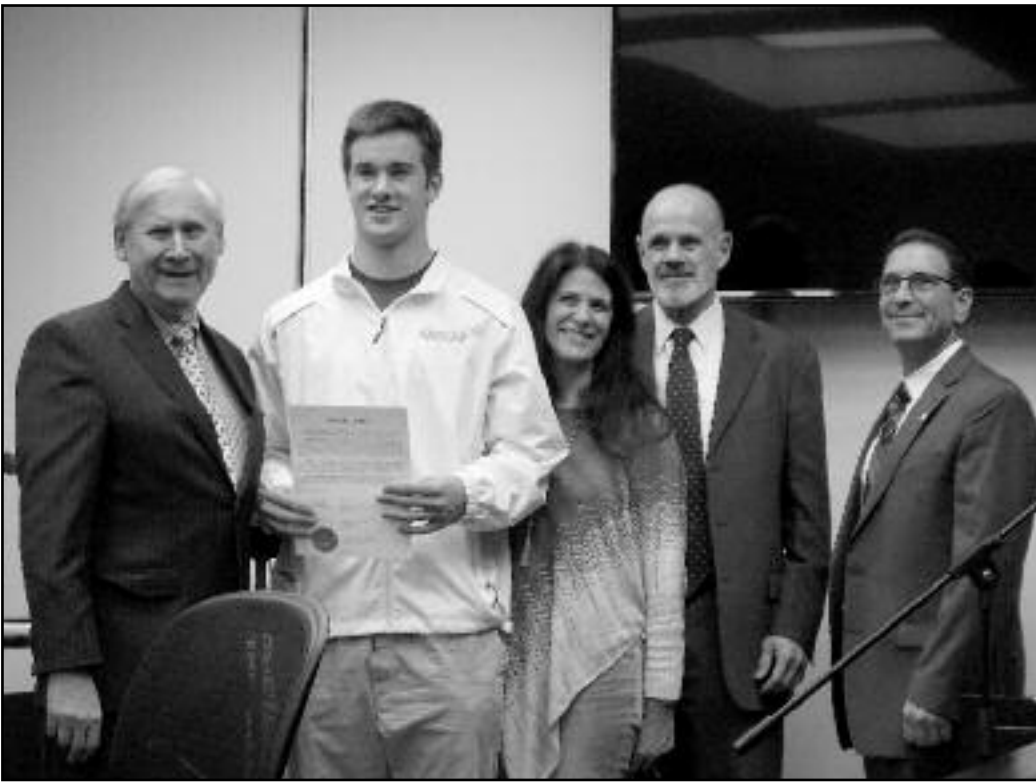


(above, l-r) Mayor Al Smith, Brandon Garcia, and Councilman John Del Sordi Jr.

On December 12, 2017, at the Town Conference Meeting, the following Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Athletes were honored: Ben Fleischer Cross Country First Team All County; Brandon Garcia Cross Country First Team All County; Madeline Bord Cross Country First Team All County; Michael Ferrara Boys Soccer First Team All County; Brogan Quigley Boys Soccer First Team All County; Cooper Heisey #1 in completed passes in 2017; #1 in passing yards with 3039 yards and which broke the previous school passing record in a single season, was named First -Team All - Area Football by the Courier News and was a 2017 Maxwell Football Club New Jersey Mini Max

Award recipient.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Girls Varsity Soccer Team has won the Union County Championships for the eighth season in a row. Team members are: Taylor Diggs; Ashley Vincent; Danielle Mrozek; Kaitlyn Mrozek; Gina Fahrenholz; Kayla Krutis; Brianna O'Brien; Erica Muskus; Sabrina DiLollo; Kylie Bierne; Kerri McNeely; Maria DelSordi; Isabella Corsaro; Stefanie DeVizio; Maggie Traina; Gabriella Kowlaczyk; Elizabeth Ley; Gabby Aloe; Maya Kessler; Isabelle Richardson; Michaela Genty; Maya Sutterlin; Jada Gomillion; Brooke Klurman; Corinne Lyght; Abigail Hanvey; and Jamie Valian.



(above l-r) Mayor Al Smith, Cooper Heisey and parents, and Councilman John Del Sordi Jr.



(above, back) Councilman John Del Sordi Jr. and Mayor Al Smith (front) members of Girls Varsity Soccer Team.

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## CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL COLLECTED AND DONATED WINTER COATS TO JERSEY CARES

Congregation Beth Israel in Scotch Plains collected close to 200 winter coats, which were donated to the non-profit community-based organization, Jersey Cares, for distribution to men, women, and children in need throughout the state.

The synagogue conducted a six-week coat drive, during which congregants donated new

and gently used coats. Seventh-grade students in Congregation Beth Israel's Religious School helped sort and bag the coats, when the drive ended.

The students also wrote warm greetings and drew uplifting pictures to be left as "a note in the coat" in the pockets of outerwear going to children.



(above) Seventh-graders at Congregation Beth Israel's Religious School with donated coats to be sorted and bagged.

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## GWACC MOVES HEADQUARTERS

The Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce (GWACC) moved its headquarters from the third floor of the Bank of America building on Elm Street to 212 Lenox Avenue, a space previously occupied by the Bittersweet Store. Gene Jannotti, GWACC Executive Director stated, "We are very pleased that after almost seventy years in Westfield that we have found an ideal street front location for the Chamber."

The Chamber was originally formed at the

Rialto Theater on April 27, 1948, and so it will be celebrating its 70th Anniversary in 2018. The storefront location will give greater access to the Chamber members, allowing for a quasi-retail operation, affording visitors and new arrivals in town to obtain information about the local store and services of the five towns served by the Chamber: Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Westfield. GWACC Gift Coins can now also be purchased at the new office.



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(above) A Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting ceremony took place on December 2, 2017 with Westfield Mayor Elect Shelly Brindle and Garwood Mayor Charles Lombardo assisting chamber president Gene Jannotti in the ceremony along with Councilman Mark LoGrippo, members of the GWACC Board of Directors, GWACC Members and Sherry Cronin from Downton Westfield Corporation (DWC).

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## CDC THEATRE CONTINUES WINNING SEASON WITH CRIMES OF THE HEART

Rehearsals are underway for Beth Henley's "Crimes of the Heart" at CDC theatre in Cranford, New Jersey. Warm-hearted, irreverent, zany and brilliantly imaginative, the play teems with humanity and humor as it examines the plight of three young Mississippi sisters betrayed by their passions. "Crimes of the Heart" won Best Play from the NY Drama Critics Circle, was nominated for a Tony Award, and Beth Henley won the Pulitzer Prize in 1981. The 1986 film version was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Screenplay.

"The Pulitzer Prize is given to honor a distinguished play that deals in an original way with American life. It is no wonder Beth Henley was given this honor at the age of twenty-five for her very first professionally-produced play," stated Director Maurice Moran "The show is a

tender, yet humorous, story of three sisters who help each other cope with loss and fear, those "crimes of the heart," overcoming the problems they face through the love they have for one another. We have put together a very talented cast who will touch your heart and make you smile as they enact this beautiful tale of family love."

The cast is made up of Maeve Brady, Rebecca Dolan and Katherine Brown as the three Magrath sisters, Lenny, Meg and Babe, with Danielle Mastropiero as Chick, Joe Leo as Doc, and Zach Mazout as Barnette.

The production will run from February 16 through 24 and details and tickets can be found by visiting [cdctheatre.org](http://cdctheatre.org).

CDC Theatre, New Jersey's oldest continuously producing community theatre, is located at 78 Winans Avenue in Cranford.

Coming in February to CDC Theatre in Cranford

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**CRIMES OF THE HEART**  
BY BETH HENLEY

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The Fanwood Senior Club's annual holiday luncheon was held on December 11th at Snuffy's Pantagis in Scotch Plains.

The Fanwood Seniors Club meets weekly through most of the year and sponsors programs for Fanwood and Scotch Plains seniors including trips, guest speakers, fundraisers and other activities. Club President Joe Bruno has kept the organization going through the past few years.

Fanwood Council members Kathy Mitchell, Russ Huegel and Tom Kranz attended along with Police Chief Richard Trigo. The Moonglowers from Scotch Plains/Fanwood High School played holiday tunes.



(above) Councilman Tom Kranz with Bob and Grace Kruthers.



(above l-r) Councilman Russ Huegel; Senior Club president Joe Bruno; Police Chief Richard Trigo; Councilwoman Kathy Mitchell; and Councilman Tom Kranz.



(above) The Moonglowers from Scotch Plains/Fanwood High School played holiday tunes.

## SCHOOL ONE KIDS CARE CLUB

The School One of Scotch Plains PTA SOS Committee along with the Kids Care Club, hosted a Thanksgiving Food Drive. With the support of the School One families and staff the collection was a huge success. A total of 662 food

items were collected and organized for delivery to the Salvation Army of East Orange.

The school is proud to serve the needs of their surrounding communities and spread kindness to others.



(above) Thanksgiving Food Drive 2017.

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# SCOTCH PLAINS ROCK STAR, PAT DINIZIO, DIES AT 62

Photo by Maryanne  
Christiano-Mistretta

By Maryanne Christiano-Mistretta

Tuesday, December 12, 2017, Pat DiNizio, front man of The Smithereens, died at the age of 62. Causes of his death were not immediately revealed, though it was known he was suffering from health complications over the past few years, including nerve damage. But he continued to perform with his arm in a sling.

A resident of Scotch Plains, the lead singer and songwriter formed The Smithereens in 1980 with bandmates Jim Babjak, Dennis Diken, and Mike Mesaros.

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s they sold millions of records/CDs of their melodic pop alternative hits like, "A Girl Like You," "Only a Memory," "Behind the Wall of Sleep," and "Blood and Roses."

The video for "Blood and Roses" had moderate rotation on MTV. "Blood and Roses" was also featured on the 1980s TV show "Miami Vice." Other tunes were scored in many movie soundtracks.

The Smithereens' music also made its way into many New Jersey nightclubs such as Aldo's in Lyndhurst and The Loop Lounge in Passaic. They also played at New Jersey's original music club The Dirt Club, in Bloomfield, before their career skyrocketed.

In 1990 "A Girl Like You" broke into the Top 40, reaching No. 38 on the Billboard pop charts.

Throughout the years, The Smithereens tour-supported bands like the Pretenders, Tom Petty, and Bruce Springsteen.

DiNizio released several solo albums and in 2001 he launched his "Living Room Tour," where he'd perform at the homes of fans, by request. That same year, he was also one of the

first musicians to support XM Satellite Radio, becoming a host and program director.

In addition to his recording successes, he had an audiobook called "Confessions of a Rock Star" and produced an independent film, "King Leisure."

In later years, DiNizio continued performing both with The Smithereens and acoustic solo shows. In 2015 he'd appear on a weekly basis at Crossroads in Garwood, performing intimate sets paying homage to bands like The Monkees, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, and The Who.

DiNizio, was not only a prolific songwriter, but also a fine storyteller. As he shared great tales in between songs at these informal shows, it was like getting a private basement rehearsal show. Afterwards, as always, he was accessible, casually chatting with fans and friends.

A diehard fan of The Who, DiNizio showed up at the Fanwood Library in 2015 when author Michael Rosenbloom, who wrote "When Stars Were in Reach," gave a presentation about The Who performing at Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains back in 1967. From the audience, DiNizio participated by sharing anecdotes about being a music fan growing up.

Scotch Plains was dear to DiNizio. He lived in other places – England, Chicago, L.A., and New Orleans for a bit, but resided in Scotch Plains until his death. In 2010, he told The Aquarian Arts Weekly that it was the only place in the world he felt "centered" and that "New Jersey is my home."

Condolences to his family, close friends, and bandmates. DiNizio's music will live on in our hearts – much more than "a memory."



(above) Pat DiNizio performing at Duke Island Park, Bridgewater, New Jersey, 2013.

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If you drove past Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School last month you might have thought that there was a traffic accident on Happel Court. In fact, it was a drill brought about by the efforts of the Scotch Plains and Fanwood Police Departments, the Scotch Plains Fire Department, the Fanwood Rescue Squad, the Municipal Alliance Committee, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood PTA Chemical Dependency Committee, and DECA, the co-curricular Marketing Club of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. The purpose of this drill was for the senior class at the high school to witness a simulation of the loss of life and injury that happens when driving while distracted or under the influence.

The Raider's Don't Risk It Project was the brainchild of Marjorie Fitzgibbon, DECA Advisor, and SPFHS student Catie Currie, DECA Executive Vice-President who spearheaded the involvement of the DECA Club members.

Throughout the school day, seniors went out to Happel Court during their Health and PE classes and watched the events unfold immediately as if there had been a crash. Students were able to witness a reality-based portrayal of the aftermath of the crash and the response by law enforcement, emergency personnel and family members. The

event was to remind the seniors of the risks and legal ramifications of driving while under the influence or distracted as in texting, using a cell phone, or horse playing. Seniors Caitlin Bourke, Ryan Lopez, and Nate Redmount played the roles of the students in the vehicle. PTA volunteers Dawn Smith, Jennifer Powers, and Lisa Ciarrocca were featured in the roles of parents of the students.

The Raiders Don't Risk It Project is a dramatic presentation to educate the seniors of SPFHS about the true consequences of poor decisions while driving. When students see their friends and peers covered in a tarp and another being hand cuffed, it hits home. It is even more gut wrenching to see the reaction of the parent actors finding out that their teen did not survive the crash and how poor driving decisions can impact so many people.

After the reenactment, the seniors participated in a question and answer session with Sergeant Brown and Chief Ted Conley of the Scotch Plains Police Department, Chief Richard Trigo of the Fanwood Police Department, and Liz Knodel-Gordon the District Student Assistance Coordinator. After the Q&A, students were also able to tour the crashed vehicle.

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(above) Students participating in a Q&A session after the reenactment.

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## SCOTCH PLAINS RESCUE SQUAD TIP OF THE MONTH HAVE A HEALTHY NEW YEAR

Contributing Author: Susan Baldani, a life member of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad.

Now that the holidays are over, it's time to not only trim our credit card bills, but to also trim our waistlines. It's a fact that most of us gain some weight between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Being unhappy with the way we look and uncomfortable in our clothes are just the tip of the iceberg. It's the underlying problems, especially when it comes to obesity, which causes the most issues.

According to the American Heart Association, "Currently, one in three U.S. adults is obese, bringing forth a possible health toll, including high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Another third of Americans are overweight." Therefore, it's best to talk to your doctor and stick to the guidelines he or she recommends for your age, gender, height and weight.

In regards to your diet, eat foods that are high in fiber and low in saturated fat, like fruits and vegetables, lean meats, and low-fat milk products. Get plenty of exercise, even if it's just taking a walk around your neighborhood. If you have underlying health problems, speak with your doctor about devising an exercise program that's right for you.

A healthy lifestyle will help you avoid many health issues, plus it will give you the energy and

stamina to accomplish everything you want to do. Everybody knows that giving up our favorite foods and adopting a more active lifestyle are tough, but the benefits are worth it.

This year, when you make that resolution to lose weight and exercise, stick to it and you will feel the difference in your body sooner than you think. And instead of visiting the doctor or hospital, go out and enjoy life.

The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad is a volunteer organization of Neighbors Helping Neighbors. With over 90 volunteers, we answer calls not only in Scotch Plains but in surrounding towns as well when needed. Besides answering calls, you will see our ambulances at many special events held in town, such as Scotch Plains Day, the Memorial Day Parade, high school football games, and the summer concerts on the Village Green. We are also available to provide demonstrations for Boys and Girls Scout troops, clubs, and any other group that may be interested in what we do.

In addition, we lend out wheelchairs, crutches, canes and other assorted medical equipment free of charge. Please reach out to us if there is something we can do for you. (908) 322-2103 for non-emergencies or email us: [scotchplainsrescuesquad@gmail.com](mailto:scotchplainsrescuesquad@gmail.com)

## SURVEY RESULTS FOR LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER

Submitted by Thomas Stowe

The Scotch Plains Downtown Redevelopment Committee (SPDRC) released the results of its month-long survey recently on both a new, expanded Scotch Plains library and a community center. The survey aimed to gather input and evaluate the needs of the public for these facilities; 773 people participated. Forty-eight percent of respondents believe that Scotch Plains needs a new, expanded library. 30 percent don't believe Scotch Plains needs a new, expanded library and 22 percent are undecided. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said Scotch Plains needs a community center. Twenty percent don't believe Scotch Plains needs a community center and 22 percent are undecided.

Eighty-three percent of respondents believe the Scotch Plains library is a very important or important community service. Respondents would like to see more children's activities (40 percent), additional computer/work stations (35 percent), additional quiet reading spaces (34 percent), and additional meeting spaces (33 percent) in a new, expanded library. Respondents frequently commented that they would like to see family programs, sports programs, arts & crafts programs, summer camp programs, volunteering programs, meeting spaces, multi-purpose room(s), pool(s), senior activities/programs, children/programs, music programs, and teen programs in a community center.

"These survey results confirm what I have heard from SPDRC members and the public at our meetings: that Scotch Plains residents want both a new, expanded library and a community center," stated Mayor Al Smith. "People also want the new, expanded library and community center to be downtown. This will be an important draw and bring more foot traffic to our downtown. I have discussed eventually repurposing the town hall building as a community center, and I will continue to get feedback from the public on their views of a new, expanded library and a community center."

The survey participants were mostly Scotch Plains residents (99 percent) between 35- to 54-years of age (58 percent). Participants were 66 percent female and 32 percent male. 85 percent of respondents use the library in some frequency. Eight-two percent of respondents said they have a library card.

As part of downtown redevelopment, the SPDRC has discussed both a new, expanded library and a community center for the downtown area as a way to draw more people downtown. The survey is not a scientific survey of the population, but an opportunity to give feedback and opinions to the SPDRC.

To view the full report and results of the survey, please click the link below:

<https://www.scotchplainsnj.gov/departments/downtown-redevelopment-committee/downtown-redevelopment-survey-2-results/>

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## TEEN PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST: "YOUR TOWN THROUGH YOUR EYES"

If your child is in grades 6-12 and they have an interest in photography, the Fanwood Library Teen Photography contest is officially underway! Those interested must take a photograph that captures Fanwood-Scotch Plains through their eyes. This contest is open to all Fanwood-Scotch

Plains library card holders in grades 6-12. Must be your original photo and limited to ONE (1) entry per person. The deadline for submission is February 15, 2018.

For more information, visit the Fanwood Library site at: [www.fanwoodlibrary.org](http://www.fanwoodlibrary.org)

## THRIFT SHOP FRESHLY STOCKED

The Thrift Shop at the Fanwood Presbyterian Church opened on Wednesday January 4th with freshly stocked clothing.

There is a large selection of winter coats and clothing for children of all ages and featured at this time is a good selection of clothing for large women. Many of these items for sale are new or nearly new.

The volunteers who work at the Shop have

been busy and will be filling the shelves and racks continually.

The Shop will be open each Wednesday from 10am to 4pm.

The Thrift Shop is located on McDermott Place at the rear of the Church complex. For further information and directions please call the church office at 908-889-8891 or e-mail [admin@fanwoodpc.org](mailto:admin@fanwoodpc.org).

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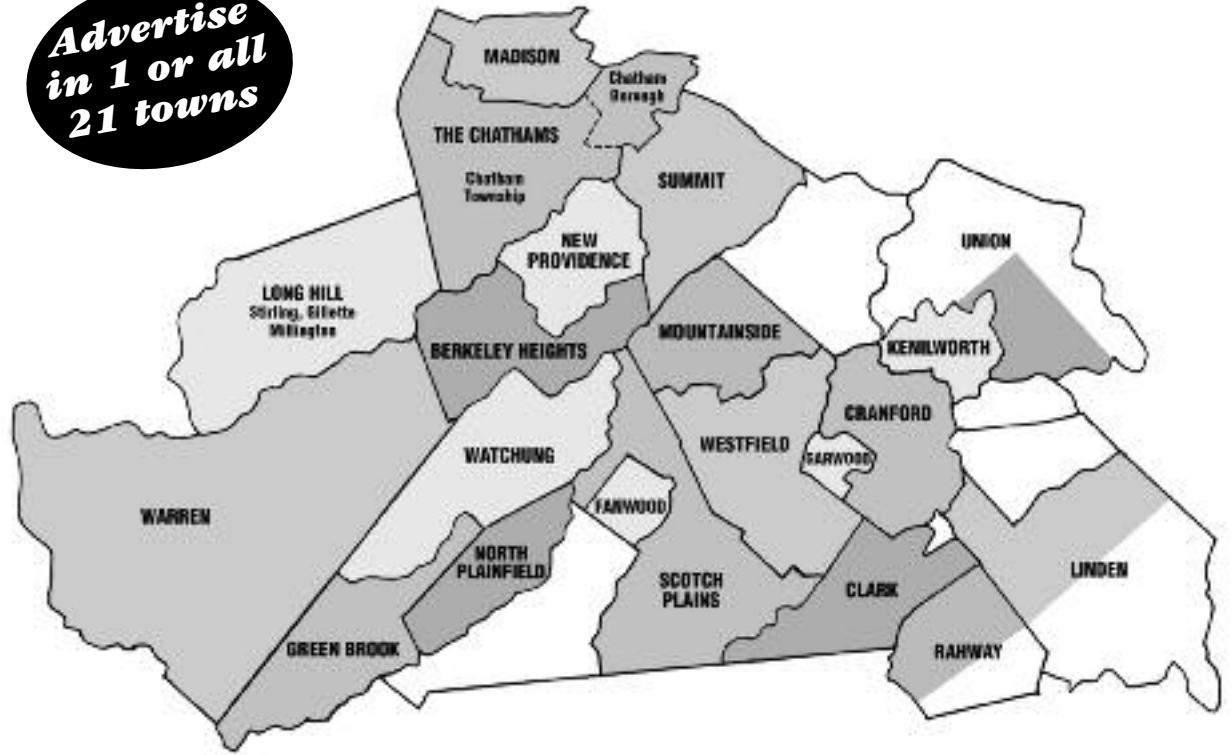
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<b>12 Units</b>	10" x 8"	<b>\$360</b>	<b>\$900</b>	<b>\$1200</b>	<b>\$1500</b>	<b>\$1800</b>	<b>\$2100</b>	<b>\$2400</b>	<b>\$2700</b>
<b>18 FULL PAGE</b>	10" x 14"	<b>\$400</b>	<b>\$1000</b>	<b>\$1400</b>	<b>\$1800</b>	<b>\$2200</b>	<b>\$2500</b>	<b>\$2800</b>	<b>\$3000</b>
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