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## **CRANFORD WRESTLING ALUMNI NIGHT**

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#### Submitted by Bob Bulger

The Cranford Cougars' 6th annual Wrestling Alumni Night were told that this is their time....get it done! was held on Friday, January 3, 2020. Cougar pride was displayed by the entire team that night. The Cougars were 6-0 following their alumni night win. Congratulations to head coach Pat Gorman and our entire coaching staff. We thank you for recognizing the alumni and for doing this every year for the brotherhood of Cougars!

Approximately 65 to 70 alums turned out on alumni night. Our oldest alumnus this year was Jimmy Farrell, son of the late great founder and legendary coach Herb Farrell. Jimmy earned his spot on his own accord, as a wrestler with the Cougars who graduated CHS Class of 1968, and as an assistant to his father for many years and interim coach when his father fell ill. He led out the Cougars Alumni procession with grace and dignity. As we lined the mats preparing for the varsity to take the mats, I commented to Jimmy that "I wish your dad was here to see this". He smiled ear to ear and responded with his high pitched voice, "He would have loved this!"

Frank Genova was 2nd in line following Jimmy. Frank was captain of the 1985 and 1986 North Jersey Group 3 State Champs and 4th in the state in 1986 at 135. He was awarded alumni of the year at this year's Annual Golf Outing and I told him then he would be leading us out! As we lined the mats the varsity came out to Johnny Cash's version of "Sooner or Later God will Cut You Down" and walked out to our end of the mat. Each Cougar was greeted by every alumnus around the able to turn out for the 6th annual alumni night event.

mat. The torch was passed to the Cougars of Today and they

Our youngest Cougars were 2019 graduates who wrestled for Cranford just last year. They were thrilled to be part of the alumni now. For all four years they got to experience what this magical night was all about, from the wrestlers perspective. The fact that so many who wrestled on the 2015-2019 teams make it back is a testimony to wrestling for our school and our town. They are welcomed in as brothers. Dean Smith, Kyell Roper, Jack Korzeneski were just 3 of the 2019 alumni who took part in the ceremony.

In remembrance we had Dana Marie Caruso, sister of the late William "Willie the Kid" Carpenter and Sam Cerrato, brother of the late Anthony "Nooch" Cerrato. We also had John Vicci who represents himself and son JT who was part of the first couple of alumni nights.

We never forget our Cougar family, it's just that simple. Some of the guys I know that did not make the photo but were there were Dave Aldredge, Rob Buchannan and Ron Melao. Most importantly, they stayed for the majority of the match and that's what it's all about.

A huge welcome back to alum Scott Bonito who made it back for the first time. What a great surprise to see Errol Petgrave show up and see him back at the Dive afterwards! He was at the very first alumni match in 15 when we beat Park and it was great to see him at this one!

Thank you to all the Cranford Wrestling Alumni who were



(above) Cranford Cougars' Wrestling Alumni gathered for the 6th annual Alumni Night, held on Friday, January 3, 2020



# **CRANFORD MONTHLY**NJ

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### **PITTSBURGH'S MEGAN PENNINGTON TO MAKE HER HEADLINE DEBUT AT NORTHERN NEW JERSEY'S MOST INTIMATE COFFEEHOUSE**

The Salem Roadhouse Cafe proudly presents so bring the entire family! Megan Pennington, performing on Saturday, February 8, 2020.

Megan Pennington was born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA. Signed to a recording contract at just 19 years old, she released her first single 'Free' and watched it soar to #1 on the VRadio Nashville Top 40 chart – the biggest independent chart in the world at the time.

Not to be enticed or deluded by instant success, Megan remained in college and received her degree. Majoring in Science, she specialized in Music Theory and was elected charter Vice President of the Society of Creative Musicians.

During her two terms as president, Megan and her newly founded club became 4-time winners of the prestigious Star Award - 3 in 2016 and another in 2017. Megan has released four singles to date that have charted worldwide and continues to tour the United States with international dates on the horizon.

Megan will be joined on stage by local performers Matt Powers, Ray Powers and "Mad" Mike Cullens.

Original artwork will be on display for all to enjoy and purchase.

Fans won't want to miss this live, up front and personal show.

All ages are welcome. It's a wholesome show,

Doors open 7:30 p.m. The show starts at 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$20.00.

Plan now for an evening of great music in Northern New Jersey's Most Intimate Coffeehouse<sup>™</sup>.

Proceeds will help YWCA Union County's PALS arts therapy program for children who have witnessed domestic violence.

#### **ABOUT SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ**

Dedication best defines the Salem Roadhouse Café: dedication to excellent music and dedication to the community. Now in its twelfth year, The Salem Roadhouse Café reaffirms its commitment to both.

Started in 2008 by members of Townley Presbyterian Church with a grant from the Presbytery of Elizabeth, the Roadhouse Café continues to operate as a non-profit that raises funds for several carefully chosen local charities. That may be its social mission... but the Roadhouse Café is and has been a solid performance venue beloved by the musicians who play there because of its special intimacy with the audience. Many of the performers describe the Roadhouse Cafe as "a great listening room" where serious music lovers can enjoy the performance without any distracting background noise.

#### **COMMUNITY ORIENTATION**

The Salem Roadhouse Café has raised funds for many carefully chosen charities. They include: The Presbytery of Elizabeth E-port Center, Center For Hope Hospice, Community Food Bank, Monarch Housing, Angel Paws Animal Rescue, National MS Society, Haiti Disaster Relief, Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief, The Union County YWCA Domestic Violence Program, Making It Possible To End Homelessness, Camp Johnsonburg, The Music Institute, and others.

The Salem Roadhouse Café often features many of the performers who have graced the stage in the past, as well as brings talent that is new to the Café stage. The current season is benefitting the YWCA Union County's PALS arts therapy program for children who have witnessed domestic violence

Admission includes the show, snacks, beverages and dessert.

See the Roadhouse on Union TV Channel 34's "Union After Dark" nightly music series.

Salem Roadhouse Cafe is located at 829 Salem Road, Union, NJ.

Visit online at roadhousecafe.org or at facebook.com/roadhousecafe. To reach by phone, call 1-908-687-1028, leave a message and a return number.

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(above) Master flutist Galen Abdur-Razzaq will present a lecture and performance, "Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement," on Monday, February 3 at 7:00 p.m.

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### MASTER FLUTIST GALEN ABDUR-RAZZAQ TO PERFORM AT COMMUNITY CENTER - JAZZ AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In a one-night-only appearance on Monday, February 3 at 7:00 p.m., master flutist Galen Abdur-Razzaq will join us for a lecture and performance: "Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement." He will discuss and perform jazz pieces by artists who contributed to the formation and progress of the civil rights movement. This program, which will be held at the Cranford Community Center, is sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

Born in Montclair, NJ, Galen has performed domestically and internationally for over 30 years, traveling to universities, concert halls, festivals, and libraries around the globe. An extraordinary flutist with an extensive performance career, he holds a Masters Degree in Education and Performing Arts from Rutgers University and studied music at the Berklee School of Music in Florida. In his performances and lectures, Galen seeks to provide listeners

with an understanding and appreciation of jazz – its theory, its musicians, and its historical significance.

In "Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement," he addresses some of those who took a public stand against the discriminatory practices of the times, using their influence to speak to the consciences of the American people. This group included Leonard Bernstein, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Harry Belafonte, Sydney Poitier, Charlton Heston, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Nina Simone, Charles Mingus, and Ray Charles. Learn more about Galen at flutejuice.net.

Admission is free and all are welcome. For information about the Cranford Public Library, the Friends of the Cranford Public Library, and other upcoming events, visit cranfordlibrary.org. The Cranford Community Center is located at 220 Walnut Avenue and is accessible to all.



### SONGS IN THE KEY OF LOVE: VALENTINE'S DAY FUNDRAISER WITH TOP CLASSICAL ARTISTS

Come enjoy Valentine's Day with us and support the performing arts at Cranford High School too! On Friday, February 14 come with loved ones to hear New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Brennan Sweet and his cellist wife, Christine play classical pieces and love songs. They are joined by multiple grammyawards nominee winner Allison Brewster Franzetti on piano.

The night offers a unique and fun way to share Valentine's Day with your family and loved ones. Light dinner will be served, starting at 7 p.m., with concert to follow at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for middle, high and college students, and \$50 for a family of up to 5.

Dinner will be served at Bates Hall at First Presbyterian Church and an open mic is available for anyone who would like to perform during the dinner. The following concert will be in the main sanctuary. To buy tickets, go to the event

"Songs in the Key of Love" at brownpapertickets.com or e-mail Christine Hoffman at ChrisFedHoff@aol.com. Money raised by this event will go to the Cranford Schools Friends of Performing Arts, a 501c3 that was formed by parents to help the performing arts program in the public schools. Our members and fundraisers have helped to support educational trips and transportation, equipment such as a cello rack, vibraphone, and a conductor's stand, and performance and instruction by the world-famous Yale Whiffenpoofs.

Please consider becoming a member!



(above) Come enjoy "Songs in the Key of Love" on Valentine's Day in support of the Cranford Schools Friends of Performing Arts.



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### FILM SCREENINGS AT THE CRANFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Join the Friends of the Cranford Public Library for captivating international and Hollywood films.

On Monday, February 24 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., we'll show films from France and Sweden as part of our Foreign Films series. (Films will be shown in French and Swedish with subtitles.) Please contact the Cranford Public Library at 908-709-7272 for titles.

On Wednesday, February 12 at 7:00 p.m., we'll debut new films Judy and Harriet as part of our

New Movie Night series.

And on Thursday, February 6 at 7:00 p.m., we'll show 2019's hit documentary Amazing Grace about the life of Aretha Franklin.

Admission is free and all are welcome. For information about the Cranford Public Library, the Friends of the Cranford Public Library, and other upcoming events, visit the Cranford Public Library page at cranfordlibrary.org. The Cranford Community Center is located at 220 Walnut Avenue and is accessible to all.

### CRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL TO PRESENT GUYS AND DOLLS

Cranford High School Performing Arts Department will present Guys and Dolls on February 28, 29 and March 1. The musical Guys and Dolls was written in the late 1940s by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows, with lyrics and music by Frank Loesser. The musical was originally produced on Broadway in 1950 and won the Tony Award for Best Musical. Since then, there have been several Broadway and London revivals of Guys & Dolls, as well as a 1955 movie adaptation.

The 2020 Cranford High School production will be presented on February 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m. and on March 1 at 2 p.m. Reserved tickets are available in advance online at chs.booktix.com for \$15, and will also be available at the door. Student rush tickets will be available at the door for \$10 with a valid student ID. The dress rehearsal on February 27 at 7:30 p.m. is open to senior citizens for free. The Cranford Public Schools Permitted Items Policy will be in effect for the performances; no bags or purses will be allowed in the theater.

For additional information,

please contact Elizabeth Sheehan at sheehan@cranfordschools.org or call Cranford High School at 908-709-6272.

Join the Cranford High School for Guys and Dolls February 28, 29 and March 1.



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### IN HONOR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH MEET SERGEANT WILLIAM HENRY LEE, ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86

By Don Sweeney, research by Stu Rosenthal, military proofreading by Vic Bary and editing by Janet Ashnault.

As the coordinator and lead writer of the Cranford 86 project, I regularly receive inquiries and requests for information in regard to many of the 86 servicemen on Cranford's honor roll. Shortly after our project's inception, I received a correspondence from Pastor William Lee III of Georgia, grandson and namesake of Sergeant William Lee, one of our Cranford 86 heroes. Sergeant Lee, an African American, died serving during World War II while in the Army Air Force (AAF). Pastor Lee was inquiring as to any information that Cranford 86 may have about his grandfather. Our team responded and we have been in contact with the pastor ever since. With Sergeant Lee's story being so tightly linked to the African American struggles to achieve civil rights, we have been trying for the past two years to profile his story during February in honor of African American History Month. It was for lack of sufficient details that we missed the last two February deadlines. Finally, the work of our researcher Stu Rosenthal uncovered some new facts that were deemed relevant to notable historic and social events and with that, we decided that William Lee's story was ready to be told.

William Henry Lee, the youngest of nine children, was born in Farmville, Virginia, likely on March 9th, 1909. His parents were York Lee, a laborer in a tobacco factory, and Cora Lee, a private cook. Both parents were born right after the conclusion of the American Civil War, and therefore were among the first freeborn African Americans in the former Confederacy. This would be the first connection to the civil rights timeline which would run through William's life story. By 1915, William's mom Cora and his grandmother Martha Booker, a freed slave, with at least 3 of William's siblings, had moved to Cranford. They first set up home at 312 North Avenue E. and then later moved to 27 Burnside Avenue. The family became active members of the First Baptist Church at 100 High Street, where William's brothers were part of the gospel choir. William's oldest brother Benjamin, age 24, entered World War I in August of 1918 and served in the all Black 536th Engineer Service Battalion. Census records tell us that in 1920, William was still in Virginia with his dad. He attended Bridge Street High School there and it wasn't until 1928 that nineteen-year-old William moved to Cranford. He became an electrician's helper, living with his mom and his brother Joseph, a chauffeur, and his sister Virginia. At the time, Virginia was a seamstress, but later became a nurse. His other older siblings had by then moved to Patchogue, Long Island.

It was in 1930, that William would fall in love and marry Bertha Bouknight and have a child, Grace Evelyn. They would set up house at 10 Elise Street, Cranford and in 1932 have a second child, William Jr. William Sr. was now employed at Progress Cleaners on South Avenue as a clothing press operator and tailor. His family said



(above) This is the only known photo of Sergeant William Henry Lee in uniform. It had been in the possession of the Cranford Historical Society and Cranford 86 was proud to share it with Sergeant Lee's grandson.

that it was a perfect job for William because he would never be seen in anything but neatly pressed clothing. Sadly, in April 1940, census reports tell us that William Sr. and his wife had divorced, and he was now living with a friend at 31 Elise Street, just a block from Bertha and their children. We have been told that Elise Street was once lined with attached row homes which were destroyed by fire in the 1960s. Today, the corner of South Avenue and Elise Street, the site of the former row homes, still sits undeveloped and the house at #31 is currently empty and appears to be slated for demolition.

As the country was trying to recover from the Great Depression, most did not realize that US participation in WWII was truly on the horizon. At the same time, within our US military itself, another conflict was brewing. The situation involving racial injustice in the armed services, combined with a higher percentage of Black Americans being recruited, was becoming volatile.

The Army War College Guidelines from WWI, a report written in 1917, referenced the problems of mixing African Americans with White soldiers. It stated that Black soldiers were liabilities, rather than assets to the war effort and that they had little capacity for initiative. The conclusion of the report was that the only place for a Black soldier in the Army was in a service or pioneer unit. Pioneer units were infantry laborers who did many tough jobs, one of which was collecting the bodies of fallen soldiers from battlefields and performing burial services. Another was "going ahead of advancing troops clearing the routes as necessary". The report further stated, to maintain order, Black soldiers should be segregated from White soldiers.

Going into the 1930s, our military was guided heavily by the report, therefore, before 1938, the recruitment of African Americans was not encouraged. But, with a world war looming, the War Department formulated a new, grand plan to utilize the African American population to bolster our armed forces. Backed by the 1898 Supreme Court ruling of Plessy vs. Ferguson, which changed the interpretation of the 14th Amendment to make segregation legal again, the armed forces would now segregate the races of their entire populations. Using the premise of the ruling, that, if they provided "separate but equal" housing, messing and recreation, they were totally within the law to keep the races separated. It would seem that the Army worked harder on the "separate" and less on the "equal". Most reports described the Black quarters and facilities as deplorable. The magnitude of what would be required to create separate spaces for the races could be better understood by examining the numbers. Between 1932 and 1939, the number of African Americans in the US military was a yearly average of about 2,000. From 1939 to 1944 that number would grow to over 500,000 at its height.

In 1942, the War Department, now having targeted part of their recruitment campaign towards Black Americans, specifically advertised a good wage to "negro soldiers". Perhaps he was influenced by the recruitment initiative or possibly by his brother's service in WWI, but ten months after the United States was plunged into WWII, William Henry Lee bravely stepped up to serve our country. On September 29th, 1942, 33year-old, 5-foot 9-inch, 136 pound, William Lee walked into the US Armed Forces recruiting offices on Broad Street in Newark and enlisted into the Army for the duration of the war. That October he was shipped out for training to MacDill Airfield on Tampa Bay, in Florida. In this era, Black soldiers from the northern US that were sent to the Deep South would not be accustomed to the blatant racism and segregation that was present there. It was a difficult situation described in detail in a book found by Stu Rosenthal, Blacks in The Army Airforce during World War II, by Alan Osur. The author describes an indoctrination that our Cranford 86 hero may have experienced upon his arrival at his new Army home and it would set the stage for the change in culture he was about to encounter in the Jim Crow south.

"A black enlisted man reported that when his unit arrived in Tampa for stationing at MacDill Field, their train was met by 'this big rednecked sheriff' who told them that there was only one place for them to socialize and that was along Central Avenue. He then introduced a local 'good n\*\*\*\*\*r', who instructed the black soldiers on

### WILLIAM HENRY LEE (continued from page 9)

the proper way to act while in Tampa."

Despite this atmosphere, William's leadership qualities must have been recognized immediately as he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in just three months.

Coincidentally, William Lee was not the only Cranford kid at MacDill Airfield in 1942. 1st LT Alan Okell, whose story was featured in 2019, was transferred to MacDill in the summer of 1942. Tragic training accidents with the B-26 bombers were plaguing the commanders of the base as they were losing "One a day into Tampa Bay". What we now realize was that crashing planes with the loss of several full flight crews was not the only problem happening at MacDill. This base would become the epicenter of a movement that would alter US military forces forever. We could be certain that our two Cranford heroes never met each other in Tampa. Although serving at the same base, it can be said that they were living in two entirely different worlds.

By the 1940's, many Congressional mandates, prompted by public sentiment, were implemented requiring the Army to accept and utilize "Negro soldiers" into all sections of the Army in the same percentage of their numbers as compared to Whites, 10%. Some branches of the armed forces heeded the new regulations and accepted and properly assigned Black recruits. But many all but ignored the orders and still placed Black soldiers into laborious janitorial, transportation, food preparation and other unpopular service positions, just as had always been done. Citing objections and individual reasons the units were in many cases allowed to maintain their status quo. The AAF units were the last branch to accept the African American, insinuating lack of intelligence represented by low mathematics test scores. The African American cadets stationed at MacDill were placed in all Black units that would repair holes in runways, mow lawns and clean toilets. It was clear to these soldiers that the Black men were doing the undesirable jobs, while the White men were flying the planes. Frustrations

were soon transformed into anger, resulting in bad morale and clashes between the races. The pretext of using segregation to keep order within the military was proving to be a failure.

In 1942, at about the time of William Lee's arrival at MacDill, a movement was taking root called the Double V Campaign. It was started by the Pittsburgh Courier, the nation's most widely read Black newspaper. The first V represented victory against fascism abroad and the second V for victory against racism at home. The movement shed light on the contradictions between our efforts to fight for a democratic ideology worldwide and the racial inequities prevalent in our own country. The Double V Campaign applied pressure through social protests and stimulated Congressional awareness of the problems that racial discrimination within our armed forces was causing. President and Eleanor Roosevelt were staunch supporters of the movement.

Around the country the Congressional mandates were being met with different levels of acceptance depending on the commanding officers of the respective bases. Every officer commanding a Black unit was, without exception, a Southern White. It was felt that the Southern officers knew how to handle the Black soldier and knew the potential within them. Later in the 1940s, Black soldiers received commissions as officers of lieutenant and above. Unbelievably, a White soldier would not have to salute or be expected to follow a command from a Black ranking officer. The highest ranking African American soldier at MacDill in 1942, we believe was a Sergeant (T-4), William Lee's rank.

Racial unrest in the communities surrounding the bases was another source of conflict for the soldiers of color. The inability to travel on public transportation or use public restrooms, restaurants or even water fountains that were designated "white only", caused violent encounters with the law which were often never covered by local news outlets. Many conflicts resulted in beatings and even killings, with the



(above, left) William Lee married Bertha Bouknight in 1932. They had two children, Grace Evelyn and William Jr. (above, Center) 31 Elise Street, William Lee's last address in Cranford. He and his family lived in 3 different homes on Elise Street. Currently it is the last house standing on the street and seems slated for demolition. (above, right) William Lee and his family were active members of The First Baptist Church on 100 High Street.

perpetrators rarely pursued by law enforcement. Use of disparaging terms when referring to the Black soldiers was common.

Racial tensions came to a head in the summer of 1943. Race riots broke out in cities around the country, precursors of the riots of the 1960s. Major uprisings occurred at AAF bases in retaliation for the mistreatment of African American cadets. In May, the riots were at Bamber Bridge in England and in June and August at MacDill Airfield in Tampa Florida, Sergeant Lee's base. We cannot document that William Lee was involved, but some evidence may point to that probability. First, as a Sergeant, he was among the highest ranking Black soldiers on base; second, he was a Northern soldier, said to be the most outraged at the lack of proper treatment; and third, at age 34, he was older than most, having enlisted late in life. So, he most likely had the respect of his younger enlisted comrades and would have felt the responsibility to support the movement.

A later uprising and riot at Freeman Field in Indiana was larger and more organized. Undoubtedly inspired by the MacDill riots, it brought national attention to the general failure of the AAF segregation quota policies of Black flying units and revealed the lack of commitment of some AAF leaders to implement War Department directives on racial matters. The military's eventual response to these uprisings, paved the way for the aspiring African American aviators who were to follow. At the same time that civil rights protests were occurring on airbases home and abroad, the government had taken notice and began an experiment to aggressively train Black pilots at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, an all-Black college founded by Booker T. Washington. By war's end, 992 pilots had graduated, half of whom flew over Europe and were responsible for 260 enemy kills. The Tuskegee Airmen, as they were called, would never lose a bomber to enemy fighters. The success of this program had a tremendous influence towards the desegregation of the armed forces in 1948.

By November 1943, Sergeant Lee was deployed. He was assigned to an AAF Radio Center in Britain, at a time when less than 1% of the Black enlisted force was attached to the Signal Corps. We theorize that Lee was placed in a select, skill-based position, undoubtedly due to the knowledge that he had acquired from his civilian trade as an electrician's helper. Radiomen were responsible for transmitting and receiving radio signals and processing all forms of telecommunications through various transmission media on the battlefields. It was hard physical work that involved many outdoor tasks in bad weather. The living quarters were cold, damp and inferior compared to the White soldiers' accommodations. Racial relations offbase in Britain were said to be a better situation with the general public being more accepting of the Black man. While he was still in a segregated army and Jim Crow rules had followed him to

## WILLIAM HENRY LEE (continued from page 10)

England, for the most part things were going well for Sergeant William Lee. grandmother Bertha showed him the image of his grandfather in uniform. He told us that he had

Sometime in the first half of 1944, Sergeant Lee was involved in a "camp accident", injuring him badly. No details of the accident were available to us due to a fire in an Army archives facility in 1973. He was sent back to the United States to a string of Army hospitals for treatment and to recuperate, first at Halloran Hospital (later to become Willowbrook State School) in Staten Island and then to the 15th General Hospital at Fort Dix in NJ. On June 16th, 1944 he was honorably discharged, 21 months after his enlistment. Four months later, on October 7th, 1944, he died of pneumonia at the Castle Point Veterans Hospital in Wappingers Falls, NY. Sergeant Lee was buried with full military honors at Hillside Cemetery in Scotch Plains, NJ.

The WWI guidelines pertaining to African American soldiers, stated they should be used primarily as infantry laborers in the pioneer units. Sergeant William Henry Lee certainly did serve as a pioneer, but not in the role that the military had planned. This grandson of David Lee, a slave from Farmville, Virginia, became a pioneer for racial justice who helped to pave the way for millions of Black men and women to follow in his footsteps in the military and throughout life as US citizens. The description of a pioneer soldier's job of "Going ahead of advancing troops, clearing the routes as necessary" had evolved into a prophecy for the civil rights movement of which William Lee was an integral part. He was an American patriot, one of our Cranford 86, and has earned our respect and gratitude.

A touching letter to Cranford 86 from grandson William H. Lee III gave us a perspective of the love and respect that the family has for their hero. In the letter, Pastor Lee told of the moment his

grandfather in uniform. He told us that he had never seen a Black man in an Army uniform before and it was the most amazing moment of his life. Pastor Lee has fond memories of his 10 years in Cranford. Happily, he never felt that his race had caused anyone to treat him differently from any other kid. As a boy he remembers decorating his bicycle on Memorial Day with red, white and blue crepe paper. He would ride through the streets of Cranford with American flags flying from his handlebars, never realizing that this was a day to honor his grandfather. The photo that had so impressed Pastor Lee as a child, unfortunately was destroyed in the fire on Elise Street. Since then, he has been searching in vain for a photo of his grandfather in uniform. Cranford 86 was so pleased to share with him an image of Sergeant William Henry Lee, from a photo which had been in the possession of the Cranford Historical Society. We are trying to encourage Pastor William Lee III to travel from his home in Georgia to join us on Memorial Day morning for the dedication of his grandfather's street banner. We have invited him to deliver the closing blessing on that day. He is going to do his best to be there. Read the letter about his grandfather at Cranford86.org.

We would like to thank the firefighters from Cranford FMBA Local 37 for sponsoring Sergeant William Lee's banner. To learn more about sponsoring a Cranford 86 hero or to donate to our cause, please visit our website, Cranford86.org, where you can read all of the profiles that have been written to date. We hope you will join us as well on Memorial Day morning, post-parade at 10:00 am, as we honor all of our 86 at Memorial Park.

See many YouTube links to related videos on Cranford86.org.



An advertisement from The Cranford Chronicle for William's employer at the time of his enlistment in 1942.



At Hillside Cemetery in Scotch Plains, we found the limestone, government issued gravestone of Sergeant William H. Lee. The stone has weathered in the 75 years that have passed since his death. Much of the engraved lettering is worn off and the stone has sunk 10 inches into the ground. The date of birth on the stone is questionable. According to census records from April 1910, we feel that William's actual birthdate is March 10, 1909.



(above) Central Avenue in Tampa Florida, the only area in town where black soldiers were allowed to socialize. It was the musical and cultural center of Tampa, much as Harlem was to African Americans in New York. Today it is a park and an engraved sign tells of the history of the African American business district that once thrived there. See the YouTube video: Tampa Technique: Rise, Demise, and Remembrance of Central Avenue

CRANFORD 86 Those who gave thier lives in service to our country. DID YOU KNOW ONE OF THE CRANFORD 86? You can email us with any information info@cranford86.org or call Don Sweeney 908-447-6511.



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## **CRANE'S FORD DAR LUNCHEON**

#### Submitted by Mary Leonard

The Crane's Ford DAR chapter recently held a holiday luncheon at Costa's Restaurant in Roselle Park. Attending were chapter members from Cranford and the surrounding Union County area.

The chapter, at the luncheon, collected gift cards to be sent to Crossnore DAR School in Crossnore, North Carolina. For more than 100 years the Crossnore School and Children's Home has provided sanctuary of hope and healing for children. The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Crane's Ford Chapter have a long relationship with Crossnore School by supporting the school in various ways.



(above) DAR members from Cranford and surrounding towns gathered for a luncheon, where they collected gift cards to be sent to Crossnore DAR School in Crossnore, North Carolina.

## **GARDEN HISTORIAN AT COMMUNITY CENTER**

Tuesday, February 25, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cranford Community Center as we welcome back Garden Historian Lesley Parness for the presentation, "Suitable For Framing: A Victorian Woman's Place In Botanic Art & Illustration."

When renowned British botanist John Lindley wrote Ladies' Botany in 1834, he did so to block women from, not welcome them into, the academic world of horticulture. Learn how women figured it out anyway and managed to contribute to science, influence public taste and advance their own craft. The Victorian artists featured range from rebels to spinsters, suffragettes to missionary wives and are highlighted with strikingly beautiful imagery and humor. This engaging program is not to be missed!

Please join the Hanson Park Conservancy on Horticultural Education at New Jersey's Morris County Park Commission where she oversaw programming at The Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Willowwood Arboretum and Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center. She is a member of the Herb Society of America, The Council on Horticultural and Botanical Literature, and Garden State Gardens, a consortium of New Jersey's public gardens of which she is a Founding Member.

> The Cranford Community Center is located at 220 Walnut Ave. in Cranford, NJ. The program is free and open to the public. No registration is required, but seating is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

This presentation is sponsored by the Hanson Park Conservancy. To learn more please visit our website, hansonparkconservancy.com or like us on Facebook.

Lesley Parness is the retired Superintendent of



### **DEAR CRANFORD 86**

I am writing to extend many thanks to Don Sweeney and his staff for the wonderful article he wrote about our Uncle Patrick P. Castaldo, GM 2. It was a job well done and will serve our family as a permanent account of the bravery and valor of Patrick. Thanks for the work done to memorialize our uncle as an American patriot and a member of the Cranford 86. The family of

Patrick P. Castaldo



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### CRANFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

The Cranford Historical Society Membership Committee announces that the Society's 2020 membership campaign is under way. The Cranford Historical Society is a non-profit educational organization whose mission since 1927 has been to preserve and perpetuate the history of Cranford for now and for future generations. We cordially invite you to join us. Being a member, you support the continuation of our archives, costume department, the maintenance of the Hanson House and Crane-Phillips House Museum, our 3rd grade school tours, our History Award program given out to a

Cranford High School Senior every year and our community outreach programs and events for visitors of all ages. Also, members receive 5 issues a year of our newsletter, the "Mill Wheel" which is always informative.

A 2020 Membership Form can be found on the Society's website at cranfordhistoricalsociety.org.

For more info about joining the Cranford Historical Society,

please call the Society's office at 908-276-0082

or e-mail

cranfordhistoricalsociety@verizon.net.

## **SOUPER-BOWL SOUP 'N SERVICE DAY - FEB. 1**

Cranford United Methodist Church invites you to our Souper-Bowl Soup and Community Service Day. On this day, the church will host a Blanket-Making for the Homeless event in combination with its annual Souper-Bowl Soup and Chili sale on Saturday, February 1, 2020, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: In the education building of the Cranford United Methodist Church, corner of Walnut and Lincoln Aves. in Cranford.

Pick up some of the best soup and chili in town. There's nothing quite like a bowl of chili or hearty soup on Super Bowl Day. Back by popular demand, six fabulous homemade soups and chilis will be available for take-out at the church kitchen on February 1, 2020, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Pints and quarts of a variety of soups and chilis will be available for \$5 and \$9 each. Advance orders are recommended. Download the order form: cranfordumc.com, enclose your check payable to CUMC and mail it to: Cranford United Methodist Church, Souper-Bowl Sale, 201 Lincoln Ave. East, Cranford, NJ 07016. Pre-paid advance orders must be received by mail or

dropped off in the church office by Monday, January 27th. If you can't order in advance, walkins are welcome but we do sell out so arrive early! Pick up your soup and then stay for blanket making in the same location.

#### **BLANKET-MAKING FOR THE HOMELESS**

Join us as we create fleece blankets to be donated to people in need of warmth and love. No sewing skills are needed because these fleece blankets are tied, not sewn. If you can tie a knot, you're good! Come with your children – this is the perfect project to model caring for people in need! Contact Holly Walker, hewalk99@aol.com to sign up. Contributions to help cover the cost of the fleece would be appreciated.

Blankets made at the event will be donated to Operation Open Heart, a project of the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless.

So, join us to warm up for the Super Bowl -warm your stomach with soup and warm your heart by making a blanket for the homeless!

Questions? Please call Angela at (908) 276-0936 or send an email to office@cranfordumc.com.

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### **CRANFORD FIREFIGHTERS COMPETE AT FOOD FEST**

On Monday, February 24, 2020, firefighters from around New Jersey will compete at the Cooked and Uncorked Food and Wine Festival benefiting the New Jersey State Firefighter's Mutual Benevolent Association and The Burn Center at Saint Barnabas Medical Center. This event, which draws people from throughout New Jersey, will be held at The Pines Manor, 2085 Route 27, Edison, NJ from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Last year more than \$50,000 was raised from the event which was attended by more than 1000 people.

The Ultimate Fire Department Cook-off will be an integral part of the evening as firefighters from 25 departments will compete in three different categories: Gourmet, Firehouse and Dessert.

The competition is part of the culinary extravaganza where participants will be able to experience the tastes and flavors of more than 40 of New Jersey's finest restaurants, caterers and dessert shops all in one location.

If you are looking for an entertaining evening of great food and wine, don't miss this event. Tickets are \$60 in advance and \$65 at the door. Visit cookedanduncorked.com to order tickets, view participating restaurants and wine/spirits and for more information.

Tickets can be also be ordered by calling the NJ FMBA at 908-499-9250.



### THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE IS COMING TO CDC THEATRE IN CRANFORD

Running from February 14th through the 22nd and winner of the Tony and the Drama Desk Awards for Best Book, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee has charmed audiences across the country with its effortless wit and humor. Featuring a fast-paced, wildly funny and touching book by Rachel Sheinkin and a truly fresh and vibrant score by William Finn (Falsettos, A New Brain), this bee is one unforgettable experience.

An eclectic group of six mid-pubescents vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, poutinducing, life un-affirming "ding" of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Part of the fun of the show is that no two performances are ever the same. Audience volunteers are selected at each

Running from February 14th through the 22nd show to participate onstage in scenes, songs and d winner of the Tony and the Drama Desk choreography.

The cast features some familiar faces at CDC Theatre and some new ones: Sean Lynch-Littlejohn as Chip Tolentino, E. Rachel Valovcin as Logainne Schwartzandgrubenier, Zach Mazouat as Leaf Coneybear, Zach Love as William Barfee, Mallory Ann Wu as Marcy Parks, Patrina Caruana as Olive Ostrovsky, Alexa Teebo as Rona Lisa Peretti, Ian Federgreen as Vice Principle Panch and Brendan Lynch-Littlejohn as Mitch Mahoney. The show is directed by Nevil Schwartz with choreography by Michelle Massa and musical direction by John Brzozowski.

Six spellers enter: one speller leaves! They learn that winning or losing isn't everything and at least the losers get a juice box.

Links to tickets and additional information can be found by visiting cdctheatre.org.



## **OAS HONORS TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

#### Submitted by Darren Torsone

During a faculty meeting held in January, the Orange Avenue School family celebrated their Teacher of the Year, Ms. Jamie Warner, who is pictured with her supervisor, Mrs. Judith Podbelski (Social Studies), and NJAPEHRD Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Suzette de Araujo, who is pictured with her supervisor, Mr. Darren Torsone, (Physical Education/Health).

Congratulations to our recipients and to the other nominees for Teacher of the Year who were also honored at the meeting: Mrs. Elizabeth Chandler, Ms. Kathleen Gilbert, Mrs. Jennifer Prevost, and Mrs. Lauren Stivala.

Photo by Cranford Public Schools



## HOMELESSNESS KNOWS NO SEASON IN UNION COUNTY

homeless and the needy?

Leaders of different faiths shared prevailing teachings on charity, generosity and poverty at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rahway on December 19. The memorial vigil honored the lives of people who have died due to homelessness in Union County.

The 4th annual vigil was held just before the longest night of the year, the winter solstice, to symbolize the struggle of those who are homeless and who often live out their lives on cold streets or in dangerous abandoned buildings. The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council organized the event with local agencies involved in the fight against homelessness: Community Access Unlimited (CAU) and The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless. CAU is a Union County-based, statewide nonprofit that strives to integrate people with disabilities and atrisk youth into the general community through comprehensive supports.

The city of Elizabeth is losing federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding in 2020 for homelessness-related services under the **Emergency Solutions Grant initiative.** 

"The fact that we have lost this money in Elizabeth will increase demand for county funds that will be spread thinner," said Carolee Marano, assistant executive director of development at CAU, which will lose \$40,000 in grant funding. "The cuts in HUD funding decrease our budget for homeless prevention programs and we are concerned about a rise in homelessness in the county. We are also concerned about a rise in homelessness among youth."

CAU operates the only youth-only shelter in Union County and runs services to support their health and future independence. In addition to the County youth shelter, CAU also operates 3 federal programs under the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act: one shelter, a transitional living program for females, and one for males. CAU also provides rent assistance to prevent homelessness.

Linda Flores-Tober, executive director of the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless, reflected on circumstances that can push a person or family into homelessness.

"There's more to the story than 'I couldn't find a job," Flores-Tober said. "What we see are a lot of people who didn't get engaged in the Division of Developmental Disabilities system and now the parents are not able to take care of them."

Flores-Tober attributed 5 deaths in Elizabeth to homelessness in 2019.

Faith speakers quoted teachings that the faithful are called by God to relieve the less fortunate of their trials or difficulties. Father Sebastian Obando of St. Michael's Church in Cranford acknowledged that Jesus Christ would fit the modern description of homelessness.

"It's really a service of remembrance, because frankly if we didn't remember them, nobody would," said Rev. Carmine Pernini of Zion Church.

Parishioners at his church took people in this winter as part of Operation Warm Heart - an

What do the world's religions tell us about the emergency winter sheltering program run by the County, according to the 2019 Point-In-Time Elizabeth Coalition.

> "It's lifesaving work – not very many people are willing to open their doors, so people of faith come together to do it," Pernini said.

Attendees sang and lit candles for 45 people who have died due to homelessness.

Pernini and Flores-Tober acknowledged a strong correlation between funding for homelessness services and saving people from the cold.

On the night of January 22, 2019, a total of 438 people were experiencing homelessness in Union

Count. A total of 39 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count, and 375 of the total homeless persons were in Elizabeth.

Rev. Ron Thompson of Townley Presbyterian Church in Union spoke about the universal responsibility to care for people in need.

"All faiths agree on the dignity of people," he said.

For more information about CAU and its services, contact us by phone at 908-354-3040, online at caunj.org or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202.



(above) Attendees hold candles in memory of people who have died who were homeless at a vigil at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rahway on December 19, 2019.



## **"WEST AFRICA ON THE EAST COAST"**

host Michael Norris, PhD, presenting "West Africaon the East Coast" on February 10 at 7 p.m. The program will be held at First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, 11 Springfield Ave., and is open to the public.

Explore the cultural tapestry of West Africa through centuries of art from within its 18 present day countries, especially the Benin kingdom of the Edo people. Included will be sculpture, metal work and ivories from local

The Cranford College Women's Club will museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum and the Princeton University Art Museum.

> Dr. Norris, a former museum educator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has presented lectures for over twenty years all over the world, especially in classical and medieval art. He earned a BA in classical art from UC at San Diego, and an MA in classical art and a PhD in art history from UC at Santa Barbara.

### **NAMI UNION COUNTY EVENTS**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Union County has two events this February: For more info, call 908-233-1628, email namiunioncounty@yahoo.com or visit online at facebook.com/NAMI.unioncounty.

#### **Family Support Group**

Tuesday, February 18, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. For family members and caregivers of a person with mental illness. Monthly peer-led group meetings help gain insight from others facing similar challenges. First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, 11 Springfield Ave., Cranford, NJ.

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#### **Circle of Friends**

Tuesday, February 25, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Join the Conversation on Mental Illness - The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Union County invites all area residents to the Circle of Friends gathering led by Joyce Benz, LCSW, Director of the Intensive Family Support Services of the Mental Health Assoc. in NJ. Bring your questions and hear from other caregivers on insights learned from their own experiences. At RWJ Rahway Fitness and Wellness Center, 2120 Lamberts Mill Rd., Scotch Plains.



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### KIDS FISHING SEMINAR SET FOR MARCH 3

The Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club was founded in 1907 and remains one of the oldest fishing clubs in the nation. We are listed on Amazon Smile and are a recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit. We provide outings to support veterans, adults and children as well as people with disabilities which focus on environmental education, fishing knowledge and practice. A complete list of our upcoming events can be found at www.nbfcc.org.

We are always looking for new members, donations, and volunteers if anyone would like to get involved.

Our monthly meetings are held at the Kenilworth VFW, located at 33 S. 21st St., Kenilworth, NJ, on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. (except July and August).

Our Annual Kids Seminar will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., at the Kenilworth Veterans Center, V.F.W.33 South 21st street Kenilworth, NJ. A Guest speaker to be announced and topics of discussion will be safety while fishing, fish identification, and practice casting. Prizes will be awarded and snacks will be served.

For more information visit www.nbfcc.org, or contact Bob Jones, BJonesJRNJ@hotmail.com, 908-272-3545

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## **RELAY FOR LIFE OF CRANFORD**

committee is looking for cancer survivors and caregivers to register for Cranford's 13th Annual Relay for Life to be held on May 15 at Orange Avenue School.

Our survivors are the celebration part of the night! They start the Relay by taking the first lap and then their caregivers join for another special lap.

Over 600 participants registered last year and we raised over \$125,000. The proceeds fund register at relayforlife.org/cranfordNJ.

The Cranford Relay for Life planning cancer research, including 47 Nobel Prize winners, and provide services, such as wigs, transportation, and lodging, to local cancer patients.

> In the survivor tent, we host a dinner before the opening ceremony and provide the survivors with a t-shirt, medal and goodie bag.

> Please contact Linda Miklencic, Event Lead at 908-497-0283 or miklencic@verizon.net if you or someone you know is interested. You can

## LITERARY CAFÉ - FEB. 8

The Literary Café, the book chat group of the Cranford Public Library, will meet on Saturday, February 8 at 10:15 am, in the Library's Raddin Room. The program format is simple. Just bring a few of your favorite books and tell the other members of the group what you like about them. The books can be new or old, fiction or nonfiction, classic or contemporary. Sessions are one

hour long. There is no required reading, and you will have the opportunity to learn about books recommended by other group members. Refreshments will be served, courtesy of the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. Registration is not required. To see what else is coming up at the Library, visit the library web page at cranfordlibrary.org.



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