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STIRLING FD VENISON DINNER: A GREAT SUCCESS

Stirling Volunteer Fire Co. held their 21st annual Venison Dinner on Saturday, February 29, 2020, in their firehouse where more than 200 people feasted on a variety of venison specialties that were prepared by Stirling's firefighter chefs.

Chairman of this annual fund raiser was Fire Chief - Chef Al Gallo who was assisted by more than 25 Stirling firefighters. Additional chefs were fire company President Craig Tuma, Past President Albert Pepe, Troy Pytell, Ronni Stein, Joe Cerami, and several coworkers.

A special helper this year was National Hockey League superstar and former NJ Devils Captain Scott Stevens. He enjoyed mingling with the attendees and was pleased to stop for photos.

Almost 700 hours were spent by the firefighters preparing for the event, including setting up, cooking, staffing the event, and cleaning-up afterward. The income they earned helps pay for training, firefighting equipment, and maintenance of the firehouse that is owned by the Stirling firefighters.

Guests who came to enjoy the meal and comradery came from central and northern New Jersey and all enthusiastically reported it is always one of the best and most enjoyable events of the year. They rated the food with 5-stars and said they eagerly look forward to next year's venison dinner at the firehouse.



(above, l-r) Raffle drawing time: Anthony Pepe, Al Gallo, Craig Tuma, and seated at far right Vic Tagliaferro prepare to announce the winners.

Photo by Frank Reilly

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(above, l-r) Servers taking a break: Deputy Fire Chief John Whitmore, Ciro D'Urso, Chris Hoffman, Alex Honegger, Sebastian Leon, Lt. Antonio Centurion, Nick Giglio, and Brian Di Donna. Missing from the photo are Jack Dede, Jack Remington, and Jeff Wanamaker.



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WHRHS NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS



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PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

Community service organizations and sports teams are encouraged to submit news of upcoming events or highlights and photos on recent events.

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

All four Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) students, who in September were named National Merit Semi-Finalists, have now qualified as 2020 Finalists. This year's WHRHS National Merit Finalists are: Phillip Ding, Dave Ki, Jessica Young and Vivian Zhang.

"Congratulations to Phillip, Dave, Jessica and Vivian, and to their families and teachers for this important and well-deserved honor," said WHRHS Principal William J. Librera. "Students who receive this distinction have a chance to compete for scholarship prizes. Phillip, Dave, Jessica, and Vivian have outstanding academic records, participate in diverse school and community activities, demonstrate leadership ability and inspire their classmates and teachers."

Being considered for this year's National Merit designation is initially based on scores by more than 1.5 million students who sat for the 2018 PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT).

WHRHS'S four National Merit Semifinalists this year had been the latest of the 52 WHRHS students who had qualified as National Merit

Semifinalists during the most recent six school years. The year-to-year totals have been: Class of 2015 – 11; Class of 2016 – 6; Class of 2017 – 10; Class of 2018 – 15; Class of 2019 – 6; and Class of 2020 – 4.

Many, although not necessarily all, of the semifinalists tend to go on to qualify as finalists. This is the second year in a row when all of the WHRHS Semifinalists went on to be named Finalists.

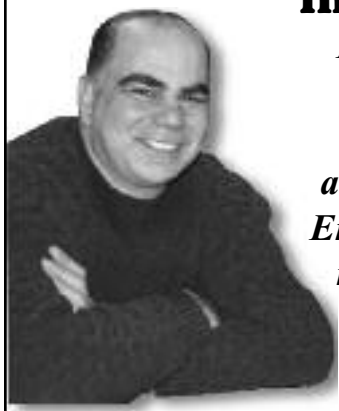
Every year, in addition to the naming of the Semifinalists and Finalists, National Merit also names a list of commended students. This year's WHRHS students named to the 2020 Commended List, which is the category immediately following Semifinalist, are: Laura Baeyens, Jagdeep Bhatia, Catherine Cai, Nyna Chacko, Tina Chen, Tamara Hadzic, Jenna Hansen, Nicole Harris, Roopa Irakam, Niharika Iyer, Apurva Joshi, Stephanie Ju, Abigail Kotar, Sana Mamtaney, Aaron Marmolejos, Manthan Naik, James Narayanan, Annabell Pu, Julia Rubin, Cristina Sarrico, Julia M. Schink, Mayur Sharma, Katie Tan, Sarah Young, Maya Zhang, and Kevin Zu.



(above, l-r) WHRHS Principal William J. Librera, center, congratulates the school's four Class of 2020 National Merit Finalists: Jessica Young, Dave Ki, Vivian Zhang, and Phillip Ding.

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RAPTOR TRUST'S DIANE SOUCY'S LEGACY LIVES ON THROUGH "THE LEONARD AND DIANE SOUCY MEMORIAL FUND"

The Raptor Trust announces with deep sorrow the passing of Diane Soucy, resident of Gillette and co-founder of The Raptor Trust, located in Millington, NJ, who selflessly dedicated her life to the rehabilitation of wild birds.

Along with her husband, Len Soucy, Diane was there every step of the way: from the inception of The New Jersey Raptor Association in the 1970's, to the incorporation of The Raptor Trust in 1982, to her much deserved 2018 Women in Wildlife Lifetime Legacy Award.

From hands-on rehabilitation, to administrative matters such as bylaws and thank you letters, to the countless personal sacrifices she made over decades, nearly everything about the Raptor Trust was done through Diane.

For over 50 years, Diane devoted her life to the rehabilitation of wild birds. She inspired thousands of people who called or passed through the doors of The Raptor Trust, looking for help with an injured or orphaned wild bird. For years, she and Len were the sole providers of the Raptor Trust, financing all of the aviaries and supplies completely on their own.

Diane handled more avian patients and was responsible for more successful bird releases than anyone else at The Raptor Trust.

Before there were any standards for wildlife rehabilitation, Diane developed successful

songbird diets and recipes which have been shared, replicated, improved upon, and used for decades throughout the larger wildlife rehabilitation community.

Diane wore every hat there was to wear at The Raptor Trust, working as a behind-the-scenes adviser, songbird manager, and emergency resolver. At a time when the phrase "wildlife rehabilitation" didn't even exist, Diane and her husband were working to develop techniques which would later become the best practices in the field.

The Raptor Trust takes in 50% of all birds admitted to New Jersey's various rehab centers—over 150,000 songbirds, wading birds, waterfowl, hummingbirds, raptors, and other birds have now been cared for here. Ultimately, there would be no Raptor Trust had it not been for Diane's willingness to go along for the ride. She dedicated nearly her entire life to the mission of The Raptor Trust and the well-being of New Jersey's wildlife.

Fittingly, in 2018, Diane was honored with Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey's Women in Wildlife Legacy Award. Her close friends and colleagues recall not only a patient and accomplished rehabilitator, but also a quiet, calm spirit that was instrumental in shepherding The Raptor Trust to where it stands today.

Donations can be made to The Raptor Trust

with a note designating "The Leonard and Diane Soucy Memorial Fund." She and Len began The Raptor Trust together, cared for it throughout their lifetimes, and now that legacy will continue in both of their names. Visit theraptortrust.org or mail check to: The Raptor Trust, 1390 White Bridge Road, Millington, NJ 07946.



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47 COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENTS OF ALL AGES ATTRACTED TO 2020 WHRHS HILLSHACKS HACKATHON

Forty-seven students, some as young as 4th grade, and some from as far away as East Brunswick Township and Middlesex Borough in Middlesex County, and Bethlehem Township in Hunterdon County, participated in the 2020



(above, l-r) WHRHS CS students at the HillsHacks, Sophomore Mariam Contractor of Watchung, Freshman Ronald Leung, and Sophomore Arjun Singh of Warren Township.

HillsHacks hackathon on Sunday, February 23, 2020, at Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS).

Coordinating the event for the second year were WHRHS Seniors Jagdeep Bhatia and Mayur Sharma. These WHRHS Computer Science (CS) leaders were assisted by a cadre of WHRHS CS students, who greeted and registered participants. They also assisted in directing participants to classrooms for workshop sessions and to the South Auditorium and Atrium for speaking programs and lunch and dinner breaks.

These and other WHRHS CS students acted as leaders in the session workshops, themselves. They shared with participants their expertise in various computer science languages. They showed participants where to find pertinent web sites on the internet to delve into various subjects, from Artificial Intelligence, introduction to Java, and video game design to Music in Coding, to name just a few.

They also sponsored CS discussions about the very real need to attract more and more girls and women into Computer Science. Of particular interest is tackling the notion of helping girls navigate through their middle school years when many girls feel the social pressure that embracing CS will label them as “nerdy” and “very uncool” in their peer groups.

The WHRHS CS students also shared helpful

hints they have found about how to employ resources found on the Internet and how to broaden their ability to use computer tools to tackle and solve more problems both now and in the future.

Faculty and volunteers supporting the 2020 HillsHacks hackathon were: Supervisor of Mathematics and Business Dan Twisler; Director of Curriculum and Instruction Mary Ellen Phelan; and community volunteer and former teacher of the Gifted and Talented Program at Watchung Public Schools, Elaine Chesebro.

There was also a panel of speakers who started the day sharing their expertise and their personal stories about how they got into computer science, how they have learned and practiced the use of various computer science languages, and how they became more comfortable at mastering and using new computer science skills. The speakers included Mathematics and Business Supervisor Twisler, WHRHS Computer Science Teacher Daniel Lamson, and 2012 WHRHS graduate Matthew Carbone, who is a graduate of the University of Rochester. Also on the panel was 2018 WHRHS graduate Jared Pincus, who has completed his second year as a CS student at Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken. WHRHS Senior and co-organizer of this year’s Hills Hackathon, Mayur Sharma, sat in on the speaker’s panel, sharing what he already learned.



(above, l-r) The Hackathon concluded with an assembly dedicated to hearing and judging presentations of 11 different demonstrations of how computer science skills could be used to solve problems. 2020 HillsHacks Student Organizers Jagdeep Bhatia, left, and Mayur Sharma, right, congratulated Second Place, presentation titled, “Disquietext,” by participant Alec Doyle, a Junior at Ridge High School, Bernards Township First Place, “Anticrastinate,” presented by two WHRHS Juniors, Sanjay Kethineni of Green Brook Township, and Frank Liu of Warren Township; and Third Place, “Door Security,” presented by a trio of 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders. They are: Charan Alampally, 6th grade at Grades 6-8 William Annin Middle School, Bernards Township; Rohin Kudeti, 5th grade at grades K-5 Chattick Elementary School, East Brunswick Township; and Krishna Singh, 4th grade, at grades K-5 Mount Horeb School, Warren Township.

RETIRED SCOUTS HELP MAINTAIN BOY SCOUT CAMPS

The Flintlocks repaired the Dan Beard Tree House at Boy Scout Camp Somers in Stanhope, NJ over the winter. This camp serves the Union County area scouts, as well as Morris, Sussex and Middlesex Counties.

The Flintlocks are retired scouters who volunteer every Thursday at Camp Winnebago in Rockaway, NJ. All it took was some lumber, some screws and some elbow grease. Since the Flintlocks are all volunteers with outstanding construction skills, it saves the Council from

hiring outside contractors to do the repairs. A small group goes up to Camp Somers on Wednesdays to work over there. Most of the men had fathers who helped the Boy Scouts when they were in the scouts as lads, and have sons and grandchildren who were, or are, in the scouts.

For more information please visit the Facebook Page "Flintlocks", or contact Flintlocks Secretary Michael Hart at drmhart@yahoo.com.



(above) The Dan Beard Tree House at Boy Scout Camp Somers received repairs by the Flintlocks over the winter.

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STATE DEP TO SHIP SEEDLINGS OF FAMED SALEM OAK TREE TO ALL 39 MORRIS COUNTY TOWNS IN TIME FOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY

In celebration of its 50th birthday and the 50th anniversary of America's first Earth Day on April 22, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is sending the gift of a prized seedling from the famed Salem Oak tree to each of New Jersey's 565 municipalities, including all of Morris County's 39 towns, for planting in the spring.

With Mother Nature's cooperation, the state plans to ship the seedlings during the last full week of April, which also coincides with Arbor Day, April 24, when all state residents are encouraged to plant trees — and when weather conditions are generally best for success. With nurturing and a bit of luck, the seedlings will grow into memorable trees from Riverdale to Washington Township over the coming decades.

For more than 500 years, the iconic Salem Oak stood on West Broadway in the historic city of Salem until June 6, 2019, when it suddenly crashed to the ground. The loss of the beloved oak was deeply felt by Salem residents and countless others throughout New Jersey and beyond.

Before its demise, the Salem Oak was one of New Jersey's best-known and most celebrated trees and was ranked among the state's largest white oaks.

Located in the Salem Friends Burial Ground, the majestic oak was more than 100 feet tall with a trunk circumference of approximately 22 feet.

Its crown spanned 104 feet. Its age also exceeded the lifespan of most white oaks, which typically live 200 to 300 years.

The oak was also known for its illustrious history. It was the sole surviving tree from the original forest that covered the land when Quaker John Fenwick, founder of Salem, first arrived in 1675. According to legend, Fenwick met with Lenni Lenape Native Americans and, under the oak's branches, signed a peace treaty. The event is commemorated by a historical marker at the site.

Only months before the tree fell, foresters in the DEP Forest Service's Big and Heritage Tree Conservation program collected acorns at the base of the Salem Oak but saw no evidence that the tree's days were numbered. From those

acorns, nearly 1,200 seedlings sprouted, were transferred into tubes and now are being nurtured in the greenhouse at the New Jersey Forest Service Nursery in Jackson Township.

"Generations of New Jerseyans will reap the benefits of this extraordinary planting," said DEP Commissioner Catherine McCabe.

For more information on New Jersey's Big and Heritage Tree program, visit nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/community/big_tree_intro.html.

To learn more about the New Jersey Forest Service Nursery, visit nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/nj_forest_nursery.htm.

For questions about the Salem seedlings, call 609-633-7700.



(above) The famed Salem Oak tree prior to its demise.



(above) The Salem Oak tree had a long history, it was the sole surviving tree from the original forest that covered the land when Quaker John Fenwick, founder of Salem, first arrived in 1675.

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TREES AVAILABLE THROUGH GRANT IN LONG HILL

Submitted by Mary DeLello

Home or property owners in Long Hill can apply to purchase up to two deciduous shade trees for \$175 each through a challenge grant offered through the Shade Tree Commission.

Through the program, property owners may purchase a tree for about half the retail value, with the township paying the balance with grant funds. Installation is free and arranged by the township, resulting in substantial savings for property owners.

Business owners are also encouraged to apply,

particularly those along the Valley Road corridor. All trees must be located so they can be seen from the street.

The challenge grant trees may be used to replace an ailing ash tree which may have been affected by the Emerald Ash Borer.

“We have seen the hazards of planting too many trees of one species such as the ash tree.” Said Shade Tree Commission Chair Susan Jeans. “This year therefore, we are expanding our species list to include some new and exciting choices.”

Those interested in participating must complete and application available on the township website at longhillnj.gov/forms/2011_Shade_Tree_Appl.pdf. This application should be accompanied by a check for \$175 per tree with a two tree limit and mailed to Township of Long Hill, 915 Valley Road Gillette, NJ 07933.

Applications are due by April 20, 2020. Only 20 applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

Trees will be planted by early to mid-May. A Shade Tree Commission representative will contact the property owner to approve the location of tree(s) on the property and to select the variety of tree that would be the best fit for the location.

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