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Berkeley Heights Expert

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ART STUDENTS BRING JOY TO FIRST RESPONDERS

Submitted by Berkley Heights Public Schools

Berkeley Heights Public Schools Art teacher Michelle Harpster hasn't allowed the current world crisis to dim her creative spirit. Working as the art teacher for both the Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center and Mountain Park Elementary School, Ms. Harpster is well known for bringing enthusiasm and originality to all of her lessons, so it is no surprise that she has adapted her plans to the new remote learning structure to ensure that her students can continue to express themselves creatively. Recently, Ms. Harpster challenged her artists from the Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center and Mountain Park Elementary School to create artwork and special thank you notes for first responders and those helping during the COVID-19 crisis. Working together, Mary Kay McMillin students in preschool, kindergarten and first grade along with 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students from Mountain Park created more than 60 thank you notes and artwork to show their support. This project was a fun way to keep them engaged with art, as well as our current events. According to Ms. Harpster, 'It has been a great experience to see students come together and give thanks during this time.'

Once their work was completed the students emailed their images to Ms. Harpster who compiled them into multiple collage spreads. These collages were then made into over thirty, 22x14 inch "Thank You" cards. Working alongside Cioffi's Deli and Pizza of Springfield and The Salad House Westfield, Millburn, and



Morristown, all of which are doing amazing work during this difficult time, the cards containing student art are being delivered along with meals to various hospitals around the state.

Ms. Harpster is a graduate of Governor Livingston High School who went on to earn her B.A. in art education and M.A. in studio art with honors specializing in watercolor at Kean University. Upon entry into Kean University, she was the recipient of the College of Visual and Performing Arts Scholarship.

As an undergraduate she did her student teaching at Thomas P. Hughes and Mountain Park Schools with Ms. Karen Pilkington and at Columbia Middle School with Mr. Joseph Lanni. After spending two years teaching art in another district, BHPS was lucky enough to bring her back here and this is Ms. Harpster's second year teaching art in our district.

Thank you Ms. Harpster for inspiring your young students to continue to create and spread beauty during this difficult time. Beneficiaries of art and food donations included: Saint Barnabas Medical Center, Overlook Hospital, Morristown Hospital, University Hospital of Newark, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Hackensack University Medical Center, Christ Hospital in Jersey City, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth.



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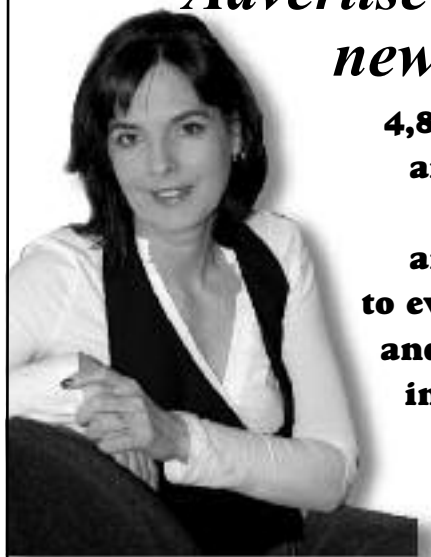
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RYAN DAVIS EARNS ALL-NORTHEAST REGION HONORS FOR FOURTH TIME

From Berkeley Heights, Senior Ryan Davis of the Penn State men's golf team was selected for the PING All-Northeast Region honors as recently announced by the Golf Coaches Association of America. The 157 individuals comprised the 2020 All-Region teams that represent six areas of the country. The Nittany Lions tied for the most individuals from one institution in the region on the 25-member Northeast list and also tied for the most honorees among Big Ten institutions.

Davis was the top team finisher in five events in Penn State's abbreviated 2019-20 season. He recorded his career-low tournament score of 207 at the Old Town Club Collegiate in fall 2019 and

tied it at the Florida Gators Invitational in February 2020. He carded his career-low round 66 in the final round of the Bank of Tennessee Intercollegiate for the second-straight year.

For the sixth-straight year, Penn State had the highest number of honorees in the region. The Northeast Region, which covers the geographic area from Maine to Washington, D.C., comprises 56 NCAA Division I programs and has the largest number of schools of any region.

For the latest updates on the team follow @PennStateMGolf on Twitter, "like" the Penn State Men's Golf page on Facebook, and follow head coach Greg Nye on Instagram @CoachNyePSU.



(above) Ryan Davis becomes the seventh Nittany Lion to earn all-region honors all four years of his career.

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Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Berkeley Heights Public Library and Book Drop are closed to the public until further notice. No overdue fines will accrue while the library is closed. Checked out items should be returned after the library reopens to the public. Please check the library's website bhplnj.org and Berkeley Heights Public Library on Facebook for updates on the library's reopening and when programming will resume.

Please make use of the online resources available through the library's website under "ONLINE 24/7 LIBRARY" (on the mobile website, scroll to "All Things E" and "Databases

& Articles"). There are a wide range of online resources for children through adults: eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines & newspapers, streaming movies, and many research and learning databases. We add additional resources to the website as they are made available, e.g. you can now access Ancestry from home through the end of May. All you need is a BHPL library card and, if a PIN # is requested, the last 4 digits of your phone number. The expiration date for most library cards has been extended until 6/30/20.

Please email reference@bhplnj.org if you have questions or problems accessing the library's online resources.

A BRIGHT SPOT DURING VIRTUAL SCHOOLING

A little bit Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, a little bit Tool Time from Home Improvement, Mr. Geiger's Garage is the latest youtube sensation making students (and parents) across the nation - or at least Berkeley Heights - smile and laugh every evening.

Frank Geiger, Principal of Columbia Middle School, took to the airwaves on Wednesday, March 18th, from his garage with a new signature greeting and sign off and a whole lot of fun, advice and good spirit. Every weeknight, Mr. Geiger has hosted a session from his garage where he chats with students and encourages

them to keep working hard, tells stories, and shows them how to make things in his woodshop. Special guests have included his shop dog Burke, Mike Skara from the BHPS technology team, CMS Science Teacher Tom Clayton, and Representative Bramnick from the State of New Jersey.

He has also challenged his students to try to guess when his youngest granddaughter will officially take her first steps in the 'Walking Beatrice Challenge'. The winning student will receive a 'snack package' delivered to their home courtesy of Mr and Mrs. Geiger.

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YOGA AND MEDITATION AT MOUNTAIN PARK SCHOOL

Submitted by Thomas Long

Mountain Park School students recently had the opportunity to practice yoga in a special assembly program sponsored by the PTO.

Students learned several movements and poses - including the cat, cow, triangle, and warrior - all while focusing on self-awareness. At the end of the practice, students participated in a meaningful guided meditation about spreading love and kindness to others.

Thanks again to the Mountain Park School PTO and Cultural Arts Committee for sponsoring this amazing assembly!



(above) Students at Mountain Park School practice yoga during a special assembly program.

Photo by Berkeley Heights Public Schools

ADJUSTING TO COVID-19

Dr. Leicht's podiatry office is doing what can be done to operate in the best interest of all patients and staff. To that end, we're taking the following measures:

1. As an essential service, the office will remain open on a limited schedule Monday-Saturday. We may adjust hours according to demand.
2. The goal of our office remaining open is to keep our patients safe, out of danger and out of Emergency Rooms. This refers to people with emergencies such as injuries, wound care, infections and our regular at-risk patients with conditions such as diabetes and severe circulatory/vascular issues.
3. If you have an urgent matter such as an infection or injury, we will work to get you in for an appointment as soon as possible. We have an x-ray in the office, so you do not have to visit a separate facility if you are in need.
4. If you are ill or have a fever, please stay home.
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SUSTAINABLE BERKELEY HEIGHTS INSPIRES THROUGH ITS 7 DAYS PRE-EARTH DAY CAMPAIGN

In celebration of Earth Day on April 22, 2020, from April 15 - 21, 2020, local non-profit Sustainable Berkeley Heights devised seven different ways for residents to engage in fun-filled, nature-focused activities for both indoors and outdoors during its "7 Days Pre-Earth Day" campaign.

Each day featured activities that people could do individually or with their families, with minimal effort. The indoor activities included growing tomatoes in potting soil, engaging in Earth Day-themed crafts, building birdhouses, and cleaning out closets so that gently worn clothing and shoes could be re-used and upcycled. The outdoor activities included going on a scavenger hunt, taking a walk or bike ride, and having a picnic.

According to Sustainable Berkeley Heights Vice President Julie Lloyd, "The idea behind this effort was to get people to focus on mindfulness and gratitude by engaging in activities that spurred creativity and enabled neighbors to connect with nature as well as their family members while observing social distancing."

People were invited to share pictures they took while engaging in these activities. Submissions

received included baby turtles climbing onto a rock as they emerged from a waterway, beautiful local flowers in bloom, and blossoming bushes and trees.

For more information about Sustainable Berkeley Heights, please visit its website at sustainablebh.org/home/events.



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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS AND GIRL SCOUTS JOINED TOGETHER FOR “VOTER GIRL”

On March 7, 2020 the League of Women Voters (LWV) and Girl Scouts worked together to present Voter Girl. Four of these events were held at the same time in four different New Jersey locations including Plainfield, Woodland Park, Brick Township and Pitman NJ.

Over 100 League of Women Volunteers from New Jersey and 50 elected officials participated as well. Numerous volunteers from the Girl Scouts and troop leaders rounded out the group that helped to bring this event alive for the over 500 Girl Scouts who participated.

This collaborative program between the LWV and the Girl Scouts provided a one-day class for Girl Scouts of all levels to earn citizenship badges

through learning about civic engagement and advocacy. League of Women volunteer workshop leaders and a variety of elected officials who volunteered to participate empowered Girl Scouts to act on their right to vote, engage in civil debate and learn to be counted in the 2020 census.

An introduction piece to the event was provided, questions were asked of a variety of elected officials who volunteered to appear for the event.

At the Plainfield location, elected officials included: Joanne Rajoppi, Union County Clerk; Nancy Munoz, New Jersey General Assembly District 21; Mayor Colleen M. Mahr, Mayor of

Fanwood; Ashley Davis, Plainfield Councilwoman; Joylette Mills, Plainfield Councilwoman; April Burke, Dunellen Councilwoman; Christine Faustini, South Plainfield Councilwoman; Keiona R. Miller, North Plainfield Councilwoman; Aimee Corzo, North Plainfield Councilwoman; Elizabeth Stamler, Scotch Plains Councilwoman; Lynn Anderson-Person, Plainfield Board of ED; Catherine Gural, Township Committeewoman Montgomery Township; Veronica Taylor, Superintendent of the Division Parks & Recreation; and Lynda Carter, New Jersey General Assembly District 22.

Each age level then attended a workshop where the Girl Scouts completed a Citizenship badge including Behind the Ballot, Celebrating Community, Finding Common Ground and Inside Government.

At the Plainfield location, thanks to the Union County Board of Elections, the Girl Scouts cast ballots on the actual voting machines used in Union County. The girls voted (depending on their level) on issues dealing with the most important constitutional amendment, how to increase participation on election day, the best way to arrive at a decision, and the most important branch of government. All groups voted on whether to ban single use plastic bags in grocery stores.

A variety of community service groups also set up and distributed information for general knowledge including the US Census Bureau, local historical groups and the local Board of Health.

This was a wonderful opportunity for girls and women of all ages to see women who are actively engaged in making democracy work. This coincided with the 100th Anniversary of both the League of Women Voters and the passage of the 19th Amendment.



(above) Over 500 Girl Scouts participated in “Voter Girl”, presented in partnership with the League of Women Voters.

Photos by League of Women Voters



(above) Girls Scouts earned badges, met local elected officials, and learned about civic engagement and advocacy.

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NEW JERSEY YOUTH SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES VIRTUAL AUDITIONS VIA ZOOM FOR ITS 2020-21 SEASON

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) announced that it will hold virtual auditions for the 2020-21 season from May 18–June 5 using the video conferencing platform Zoom. Audition registration for NJYS' 15 ensembles including strings, winds, percussion, jazz, chamber music, and three full orchestras is available online now through May 10. Audition requirements and more information can be found at NJYS.org. Interested candidates with specific questions can also send an email to info@njys.org. The deadline for audition registration is Sunday, May 10, 2020.

Said Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo, "I believe looking to the future is important in this time of uncertainty, not only to maintain a sense of normalcy, but also because it is healthy for our young musicians to have goals to work towards."

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), founded in 1979, is a tiered orchestral program

offering ensemble education for students in grades 3-12 across New Jersey. NJYS has grown from one orchestra of 65 students to over 500 students in 15 different orchestras and ensembles, including the internationally recognized Youth Symphony. NJYS ensembles have performed in venues including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Carnegie Hall, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. NJYS has received numerous prestigious awards for its adventurous programming from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and has had six European tours, including participation in the Summa Cum Laude International Youth Festival and Competition (Vienna), winning First Prizes in July 2014 and 2017.

Now in its 41st season, NJYS continues to achieve musical excellence through intensive instruction and high-level performance. Under

the guidance of a talented team of conductors, coaches, and teaching artists, students are immersed in challenging repertoire, learning the art of ensemble playing, and exploring their potential in a supportive and inclusive environment. NJYS remains committed to programming works by diverse composers and featured 20th century African-American and women composers such as Duke Ellington, George Walker, Yvonne Desportes, Emma Lou Diemer, Julia Perry, and Florence Price this season.

The New Jersey Youth Symphony is a program of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts. Wharton is New Jersey's largest non-profit performing arts education organization serving over 1,500 students of all ages and abilities through a range of classes and ensembles. In addition to the New Jersey Youth Symphony, programs include the Paterson Music Project and Performing Arts School.



(above) Audition registration for New Jersey Youth Symphony's 15 ensembles is available online now through May 10.

NJ PRIMARY ELECTIONS MOVED TO TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020

Executive Order 120 postpones primary elections on Tuesday, June 2 to Tuesday, July 7 in response to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Includes primaries for President, US Senate, US House of Rep, 25th District NJ Legislature, county and municipal elections.

Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi advised voters at risk to plan ahead and use a Vote-by-Mail ballot to participate in the upcoming Primary Election, in accordance with guidance from health officials regarding the coronavirus COVID-19.

"Persons at risk are being advised to avoid crowded situations and maintain social distance," said Ms. Rajoppi. "With the outbreak of COVID-19, there is all the more reason to use a Vote-by-Mail ballot and ensure your voice is heard on Election Day."

Under New Jersey state law, any eligible voter can use a Vote-by-Mail ballot. There is no requirement to provide a reason.

"Every Vote-by-Mail ballot is counted in every

election, the same as for in-person voting," Ms. Rajoppi said.

Voters are advised to use Vote-by-Mail as a matter of routine, to avoid any unforeseen circumstances that could prevent them from voting in person on Election Day.

Voters who have never used a Vote-by-Mail ballot can apply for one now, by visiting the County Clerk's elections website at unioncountyvotes.com for a downloadable version. To have an application sent by mail, call the County Clerk's Elections Division at 908-527-4996.

After the Vote-by-Mail application is approved, the voter will receive their ballot prior to Election Day. This year, the Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, June 2 in New Jersey. The General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3.

For more information about all County Clerk programs and services, visit online at ucnj.org/county-clerk or call 908-527-4787.

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NETWORK

KATYA STEC LAUNCHES ALL AGES OF GEEK

Geek culture knows no bounds. It crosses every social barrier and unites an eclectic group of people who share specific interests. The label, which usually is thrust upon a person, is now worn with pride. Geeks who historically existed at the fringes of the pop culture are now main stream. Their ranks are filled with regular folks. And the nerds of the baby boomer generation have joined the ranks.

The internet has given rise to a secret society. The image of a nerd playing video games in his parents' basement has been shattered. Geeks are among the masses, living, working, and playing next to regular folk. All Ages of Geek is a multimedia production company that speaks to them.

Katya Stec is a self-proclaimed geek from Clark, New Jersey who formed All Ages of Geek in 2019, with the core focus of producing content in tandem with the geek culture. She has been creating videos for eight years and has over 700 episodes posted on her website and on YouTube. She now has over 100,000 subscribers clocking over 20 million views!

Katya, who is a talented voice over artist and writer, is a product of home schooling where she was able to cultivate her interests. Now, at 26 years old, she has a career, doing what she loves.

Throughout 2020 All Ages of Geek will be traveling to several geek culture events, conventions, and expos. They aim at making some of the best high-quality content. At the same time, mass awareness and promotion campaigns would be in swing to set the base for their big launch in January 2021.

Katya has built a team of talented, creative fans who work together in producing podcasts and shows. All Ages of Geek has an article section on their website titled "This Just In." Their writers, who are from all parts of the world, submit weekly articles covering geek

culture events, topics and all forms of creativity.

Currently, they are also producing several video series and podcasts. The company is hopeful of churning out some of the best content and gathering a good base of loyal fans that would engage with the whole community and keep sharing their content to help them amass even more views, exposure, and popularity.

Katya says "Geek culture is what brings the world together. Despite our differences in race, religion, sexuality, and background. One thing is certain about geek culture, it unites us. All Ages of Geek's mission isn't just to entertain; it's to unite the geeks of all ages as part of an interactive community."

The company has a strong interactive community on YouTube and Twitch. The sense of community is both important and powerful and it does wonders when it comes to promoting the firm in the long run.

Their content spans different genres and caters to kids and adults alike. No doubt, if their vision manages to take the due shape, they are likely to become a massive hit among people, especially anime, video games and Dungeons and Dragons fans alike who would finally feel like they too truly belong.

All Ages of Geek has plenty of free content but viewers can access a lot more features by becoming paid members on Patreon or Twitch. They have over 300 members to date with a goal of 1,000 by 2021. They offer advertising opportunities, and their production team can produce original content for businesses and organizations.

To learn more about All Ages of Geek visit: allagesofgeek.com/

Email-id: pr@allagesofgeek.com

Website: <https://allagesofgeek.com>

CALLING ALL GEEKS, NERDS, AND GAWKERS

Renna Media is putting a call out to the Geeks among us to appear on their podcast Mind Your Own Local Business. The show will showcase local businesses and people who are starting or growing a business, especially those in creative fields or doing something they have a passion for. Owner, Joe Renna, started his business in 1984 as a graphic designer that grew his studio into a marketing and advertising company. Now, along with his wife Tina, publishes 21 community monthly newspapers mailing out 135,000 to every home and business.

Joe says "I started my business right out of college and thought I would get a job if it didn't work out. Its been thirty five years and I never looked back. I thank all those who mentored me along the way, experienced business owners who were generous with their time and taught me best practices in running a businesses and the pitfalls to look out for."

As a way of paying it forward, Joe offers business and advertising advice to local business. This service is the focus of a new YouTube show. Joe Renna's Hyper Local Network is the YouTube Channel of Renna Media. Mind Your Own Local Business is the prime show. Its first episode will feature Katya Stec of Clark, New Jersey who launched her production company All Ages of Geek. Katya has teamed up with Renna Media made her platform, with over 100,000 subscribers, available to Renna Media advertisers and organizations.

Renna Media is recruiting businesses to participate, If your a Geek or just Geek curious, a variety of advertising opportunities exist, from product placement to fully customized shows. All online advertisers will also be featured in the Mind Your Own Local Business column in 135,000 newspapers!

To learn more call Joe Renna at 908-447-1295 or email him at joerenna@rennamedia.com.



(above) Katya Stec on set in her home studio in Clark, New Jersey, where she produces shows for her All Ages of Geek broadcasts. Photo by Tatiana Szewczuk.

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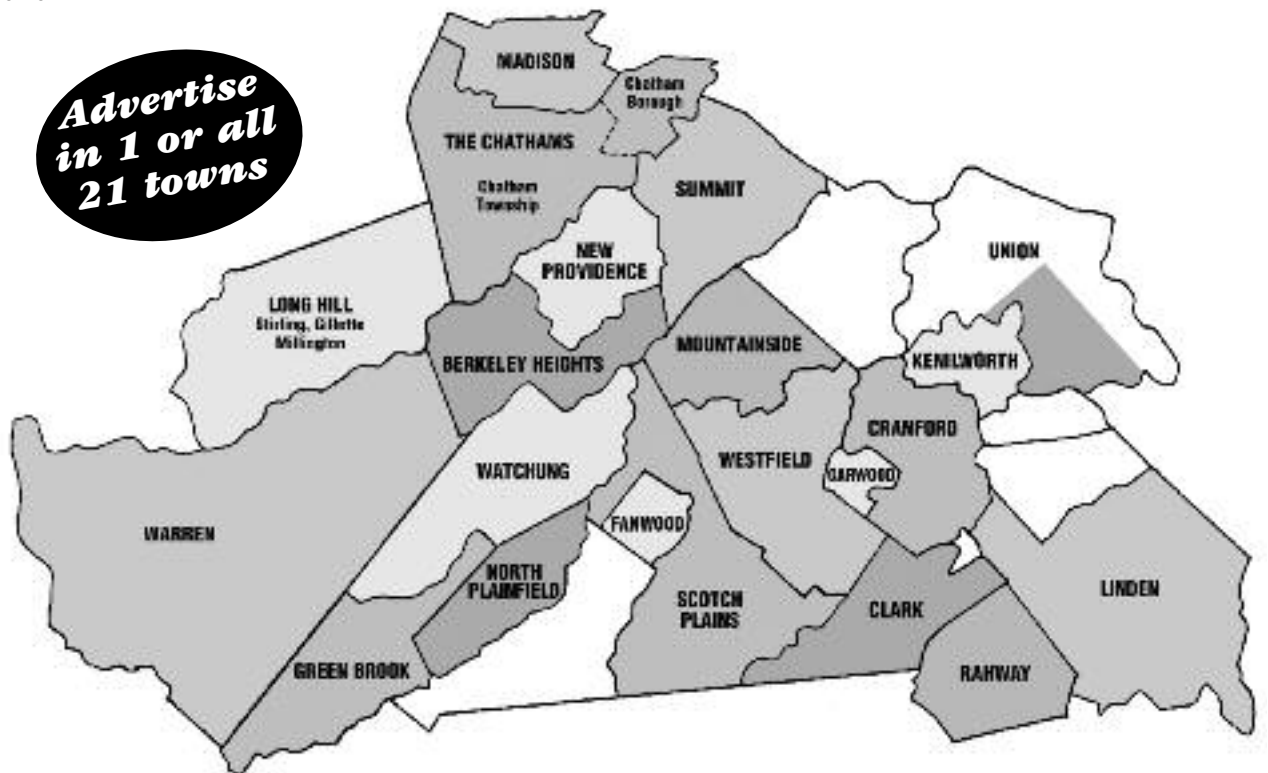
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on Joe Renna's Hyper Local Network on YouTube



See how businesses and organizations are getting by during the COVID-19 crisis on Joe Renna's Hyper Local Network on YouTube.

RENNA MEDIA COLLABORATES WITH ALL AGES OF GEEK

Katya Stec reached out to Joe Renna of Renna Media when she was a teen exploring opportunities to express her creativity in his newspapers. Renna Media publishes twenty-one community newspapers and has an active web presence and social media network. Through the years, Katya has developed her own online media production platform and made her service available to Renna Media's readership and advertisers.

Renna Media has been in business since 1984. The focus of its publications is to promote community service organizations to a hyper-local market. Joe and his wife Tina deliver marketing, advertising and publishing services to local businesses and organizations, in-print and on line. They have joined forces with NJlocalinfo.com to offer website, SEO and social media services. By collaborating with All Ages of Geek they are able to offer video production and hosting.

Joe admits he has Geeky tendencies and shared "I have many Geeks among the folks I deal with on a day to day basis. The Geek culture is prevalent and is revealed when you get to know colleagues on a personal level. It would be fun to showcase businesses and people in my newspaper and in video. It is a great marketing tool and an ice breaker to connect businesses to like-minded customers."

Renna Media and All Ages of Geek has developed a simple inexpensive menu of production services for businesses to make a foray into online marketing. The all inclusive packages are:

- Product placement \$250
- 30 second commercial \$500
- 3 minute spot \$1,000
- 30 minute show \$1,500
- 3 hour shoot - \$2,000

All videos will also be blasted through the extensive social media network and the business will be featured in the newspapers, driving readers to the websites. The approach follows the model of Renna Media's newspapers: Delivering hometown community service news to a hyper-local audience, at affordable rates.

Businesses or organizations who would like more information or help with their marketing plans can call Joe Renna at 908-447-1295.

Email joerenna@rennamedia.com

Visit: RennaMedia.com

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