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ALYSSA KRUTIS AND KELLY SAUM AWARDED

Submitted by Denis Kelly

Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Class of 2020 graduating seniors Alyssa Krutis and Kelly Saum have been named the recipients of Watchung Hills Regional Education Association (WHREA) Scholarship for Future Educators.

“Congratulations to Alyssa Krutis and Kelly Saum for being selected as this year’s recipients of the WHREA Scholarship for Future Educators,” said WHRHS Social Studies Teacher Greg O’Reilly, the WHREA association president. “Since 2007, the WHREA has granted more than \$24,000 to future educators from our school. The scholarship is funded by members through an annual WHREA event in addition to individual contributions.”

O’Reilly continued, “Our association has always been supportive of students looking to become educators. It is inspiring to see young adults, who were raised in a community that prioritizes virtues such as integrity, empathy, and patience, decide to dedicate their lives towards public service. There are several Warrior alumni who are employed in various capacities in our district as educators. It is always incredibly special to work alongside homegrown teachers and staff. Wherever Alyssa Krutis and Kelly Saum eventually teach, it is rewarding for us that we were able to help.”

Alyssa Krutis plans to attend Kutztown University, Kutztown, Pa., west of Allentown, Pa., to major in Elementary and Special Education.

Krutis’ said her experiences at WHRHS have been influential and have nurtured her dream to someday work as a teacher in an elementary school.

Krutis started babysitting when she was just 12-years-old, and it was then that she realized that she loved being around kids. Looking back to her elementary school years, Krutis remembers the significance and influence a reading teacher had on her development.

The other recipient of the WHREA Scholarship for Future Educators, Kelly Saum, plans to attend Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, Pa, just west of Harrisburg, to study Early Education, Special Education.

Like Krutis, Saum said she has also been greatly influenced by her high school experience at Watchung Hills. Saum’s strong academic achievement, along with her meaningful connection to several school and community groups, have been key in guiding her to decide to study education in college. She too has completed courses in the Child Development program and Saum has built a strong foundation for her future studies.

Growing and maturing as a student at WHRHS, Saum believes that the “classroom has provided me with great learning opportunities and the chance to increase my leadership skills.” This has also happened outside of the classroom because Saum is an active member of student government as well as several service organizations.



*(above, l-r) ‘Future Educators’ Scholarship
winnes Alyssa Krutis and Kelly Saum.*

Photos by WHRHS

“As a member of The Red Cross Club and the BELIEV club at school, I’ve had the chance to give back to people in need,” Saum said.

Outside of school, Saum has a connection with a local Lion’s Club. Saum was elected president of the Lion’s Club youth group.

Additionally, her employment record is deep and significant. This is her third year working as a teaching assistant with a local childcare learning center. The part-time job has helped Saum earn a little money but, as importantly, gain first-hand experience working with younger kids. Saum said, “Witnessing how I can influence a student’s success has been enjoyable and enlightening for me. In a way, it has helped me realize what is in my future.”

There is one other very important connection Saum has with WHRHS and that is her position with the wrestling team. Throughout high school, Saum has been the statistician and team manager for the program. And, as many locals will note, the Warrior Wrestling Program has always been regarded as one of the more successful programs in New Jersey, winning County, District and even State Sectional championships. Saum has been a part of that achievement.

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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.

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ALPHADEMIC LEARNING DONATES TO CENTER FOR HOPE HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Submitted by Daniel Zhang

On August 12, 2020, seven local high school volunteers from Watchung Hills Regional High School and Ridge High School visited the Center for Hope Hospice and Palliative Care in Scotch Plains, NJ. They represented over 20 instructors and staff from the nonprofit organization Alphademic Learning and brought a donation of 300 medical protection gowns. The gowns will go toward helping healthcare workers protect themselves and patients from infectious diseases.

Alphademic Learning was founded and run by Watchung Hills Regional High School students. It was established in early April of 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic, providing K-12 students access to free virtual courses in math, science, humanities, and art outside of the traditional classroom setting. Its mission is to motivate students, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue their academic passions and strive to better themselves and their community.

Even though the courses are free, instructors have taken the time to prepare lesson material

and engage in meaningful conversations with students during class. Some have even given up paid jobs to give back to other students. Their effort has been well recognized and appreciated by students and their parents, many of whom made donations to show their support and encouragement.

Funding for this event came from hundreds of individual donations of just a few dollars each. Alphademic Learning hopes to continue providing exceptional academic courses and using support from donors and sponsors to engage in future community building projects such as this one.

Since its founding, Alphademic Learning has grown to over 2,700 students from 40 states in the US and 5 countries worldwide, and offered more than 20 classes. These classes are taught by nationally recognized high school volunteers across the US, who have ranked highly in various academic competitions.

To sign up for free classes, volunteer to teach and help with community projects, or make a donation to support the organization's mission, please visit alphademic.org.



(above) Mr. Frank Brady (president of the center), Nathan Zhang, Anmol Bhatia, Daniel Zhang, Daniel Zeng, Stanley Jiang, Bryan Zhang, and Brenda Zhang

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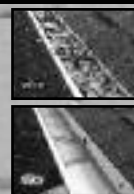
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RETIRING WHRHS STAFFERS THANKED FOR THEIR SERVICE

Submitted by Denis Kelly

The Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Board of Education acknowledged the retirement of several staffers with resolutions adopted at its meeting on Tuesday, June 16.

Among them are: Front Office Support Staffer Eliana Azar, Culinary Arts Teacher Susan Jaslove, Director of Special Services Marianne Sales, School Bus Driver Herbert Schulz Jr., Mathematics Teacher Laurie Shoemaker, and Attendance Clerk and Secretary to a Vice

Principal Barbara Vargo.

Not picture is Herbert Schulz, who was first employed by WHRHS in September 1994, and for the past 29 years he has served professionally as a school bus driver, according to the board's proclamation. "He has garnered the respect and admiration of those who interacted with him for

his loyalty to our students and staff; and he has had an impeccable driving record," the resolution notes. Schulz has "demonstrated his commitment to our students by providing transportation for clubs, sports and field trips. His dedication to our district has been outstanding and he has served with honesty and integrity."



(above) WHRHS Mathematics Teacher Laurie Shoemaker started working at WHRHS in September 1982. "She has been noted for her commitment to education, strong bonds with students and staff, unmatched passion for mathematical instruction, and sense of humor," according to the board's resolution. Continuing, the resolution states, "because of her expertise as a learner, her knowledge of Mathematics, and her ability to motivate all levels of students, she has been invaluable to the school as a whole;" and "she is a life-long learner whose ability to continue both her and her students' knowledge of technology, mathematics, and the art of learning."



(above) Barbara "Bobbi" Vargo, who was first employed by WHRHS in August 1991, and who has served the school district as attendance clerk and secretary to the vice principal, "has been a highly effective professional whose trustworthiness, commitment, and institutional knowledge have been the cornerstones of her career at Watchung Hills," according to the board. She retired in December.




(above) Marianne Sales, the WHRHS Director of Special Services, is retiring this year after a 36-year career in education, including 31 at WHRHS. "During my tenure at Watchung Hills, I have had the great pleasure to participate in the educational program in a number of roles: Director of Special Services, Transition Coordinator, Supervisor of Special Services, Special Education Teacher, Marching Band Marching Front Advisor, All School Council Advisor, and Grade Level Advisor,"






(above) According to a resolution adopted by the WHRHS Board of Education, for the past 28 years, Front Office Support Staffer Elaine Azar has provided WHRHS students "attentive assistance, always with a smile on her face," interacted with parents and the community "in a positive, engaging, and supportive, manner," and has earned the respect and admiration of others for her "empathy, thoughtfulness, and emotional intelligence."



(above) Susan Jaslove was first employed by WHRHS in October 2010 as a Culinary Arts teacher. The resolution calculates, "her expertise and passion for children have influenced more than 2,000 students and spanned more than 14,000 class lessons over 10





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TREES AVAILABLE THROUGH GRANT IN LONG HILL

Home or property owners in Long Hill can apply to purchase up to two deciduous shade trees for \$200 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 businesses along the Valley Road corridor. All trees must be located so they can be seen from the street.

Tree species available for the grant are maples,

redbuds, native pears, and a few evergreens. 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 an application available on the township website at longhillnj.gov/notices/2020/Shade-Tree-Challenge-Grant-Application.pdf. This application should be accompanied by a check for \$200 per tree with a two tree limit and

mailed to Township of Long Hill 915 Valley Road Gillette, NJ 07933.

Applications are due by September 14, 2020. Only 20 applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

Trees will be planted by mid-October. 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.

The commission reserves the right to make the final decision on location and arrangement for installation. Once installed, the property owner becomes responsible for the watering and maintenance of the tree as prescribed by the Commission.

HURRICANE ISAIAS' VISIT TO LONG HILL

In August Hurricane Isaias paid a visit to Long Hill pounding it with wind gusts of over 65 mph and 7 inches of rain. Power outages effected 100% of the Township.

Mayor Brendan P. Rae stated "I thank Police, Fire, the Rescue Squad, OEM, CERT, and DPW for all their efforts yesterday in the Township's recovery process. I especially thank the many residents who I saw coming together spontaneously with hard work and random acts of kindness to assist their neighbors. Once again, we are overcoming another calamitous weather event as one community. Thank you and stay safe."



(above) Serious storm damage occurred on Aug. 4 on Chestnut St. between Central Ave., when a tree fell during the high winds it snapped in two a telephone pole with transformer. As it went down the transformer separated from the pole and ended in the street. The street was cleared and power restored late on August 5th.

Photo by Stirling Fire Department

UPCOMING EVENTS AT LONG HILL LIBRARY

Below are a few events that the Long Hill Library will be offering via zoom.

Start Planning for New Zealand!

Thursday, September 24

6 p.m. until 7 p.m. via zoom

Is New Zealand on your bucket list? Save the long plane ride and strap yourself in for a one hour whirlwind zoom tour with Nancy Ori and the Long Hill Township Library.

Nowhere in the world can you find such a land as New Zealand for sheer beauty and scale.

Volcanoes, glaciers, high mountains, fiords, tussock lands, and geothermal springs — the country is a treasure trove of natural wonders. Our trip will concentrate on the highlights of the South Island. The South Island has some of the most dramatic scenery in the world, with towering peaks, glaciers, majestic fiords, and pristine lakes.

Author and photographer Nancy Ori will share her images and experiences from her amazing photographic tour via zoom.

Register by emailing

librarians@lhtlibrary.mainlib.org

Who Really Elects the President: The Workings of the Electoral College

Tuesday, September 15,

7 p.m. until 8 p.m., via zoom

Have you ever wondered about how the Electoral College actually works? How many votes does each state receive? How someone comes to be an elector? In the early days of the Republic, the Founding Fathers designed this political process as a way to manage an unruly public and, if needed, overturn the election results. So has it worked in the way that it was intended? In this program, participants will learn about this history of the Electoral College and how it works through a first-hand account.

Speaker: Frank Argote-Freyre, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor, Kean University

Frank Argote-Freyre is an Associate Professor at Kean University. He earned his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in Latin American History.

Frank received a NJCH Honor Book designation in 2007. Also, he was an elector for President Obama in 2012.

Register by emailing

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UNITED WAY KICKS OFF VIRTUAL SCHOOL SUPPLIES DRIVE

Need for school supplies even greater due to the pandemic

United Way of Northern New Jersey is seeking help from volunteers and donations of new school supplies for its annual United Way Tools for School drive, which provides students with the basic tools needed for learning in any classroom — either in school or virtually from home.

Children still will need basic school supplies, no matter how instruction will be delivered due to the pandemic. The drive seeks to benefit more than 10,000 elementary and middle school children of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) workers and those in poverty throughout the northern New Jersey region.

Through a partnership between United Way and YouGiveGoods.com, donors can make an online purchase of supplies that will be delivered automatically to United Way or a partner school.

Donations can be made by visiting www.UnitedWayNNJ.org/ToolsforSchool.

Based on needs expressed by local educators, United Way is collecting the following school supplies: hand sanitizer, masks, backpacks, lunch boxes, binders, three-ring notebooks, book covers, filler paper, pocket folders, composition and spiral notebooks, index cards,

calculators, pencils, pencil cases, pencil sharpeners, erasers, pens, highlighters, crayons, markers, colored pencils, construction paper, glue, rulers, and scissors.

In addition, school nurses have asked for personal care items such as toothbrushes, deodorant, and kindergarten and first grade-aged children’s underwear and socks. Gift cards that can be used to purchase items such as shoes and clothing are also appreciated.

United Way Tools for School seeks to alleviate the budget strains on families who already were struggling to afford basics such as housing and food even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

“ALICE essential workers need our help now more than ever,” said Kiran Handa Gaudio, CEO of United Way of Northern New Jersey. “United Way Tools for School offers companies, groups, clubs, places of worship, families and individuals a safe way to help neighbors facing unprecedented levels of need.”

For more information about making donations, holding a United Way Tools for School drive, visit www.UnitedWayNNJ.org/ToolsforSchool, email Lisa.Galonardo@UnitedWayNNJ.org or call 973.993.1160, x503.

Who is ALICE?

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ALICE has no safety net in times of crisis	ALICE's income falls short of essentials	ALICE is working, yet not earning enough

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SHORT-TERM REHABILITATION
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Nathan Weiser
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Thank you Spring Grove for a wonderful and pleasant stay.

Charles Sherrick
★★★★★
I have been at Spring Grove for a few weeks now, they have exceptional service and excellent staff. All the nurses have been professional and attentive to all my needs. I never thought a rehab center can have such a beautiful layout and well put together. The newly renovated room I have stayed in, is up to date and extremely clean. The therapy staff have gone above my expectations with their expertise and getting me to where I am today. Alyssa the social worker has gone above and beyond with all her assignments.
Thank you Spring Grove.

Chrissy Sloan
★★★★★
The nursing staff and administration is professional, patient, attentive and understanding. The facilities are very clean and well maintained. My parents room is always clean and tidy. Although it was a difficult decision to make relocating my folks from a home environment to a senior living facility, Spring Grove made my decision easy.
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A few years ago, I was approached by a friend and co-worker of mine who expressed how extremely depressed he was and that he wanted to take his own life. Initially, I was completely shocked because this guy always seemed to be upbeat and happy all the time. Immediately, I asked him to come with me to a private office so we could talk about his awful situation. This was the first time in my life that I had a friend talk to me about suicide, and I knew I had to really do my best to help him get through this horrible ordeal. We spoke for a few hours and I listened closely to everything he said. I was able to convince him to immediately get some help and we went to the hospital. I stayed with him at the hospital and met with him when he was released. I did everything to show my friend that I had his back and because of this he is alive today. This awful situation inspired me to do whatever I possibly can to help others in need and shortly after we created our mobile outreach program.

In today's day and age, most of you have known a veteran or first responder that has taken their own life. Every day we lose nearly twenty-two veterans and approximately three hundred first responders every year to suicide. Even with all the awareness and new anti-suicide programs available, this number has not changed and, in some cases, has increased. The Veteran Hospitals' PTSD and mental health programs are packed with patients and unfortunately, they continue to grow. More of our first responders

are also seeking help and utilizing some of the state programs being offered. So many people want to help and put an end to this crisis but sadly there isn't a foolproof program available that will stop this ever-growing crisis from destroying our uniformed heroes and their family's lives.

For the last two years our team has been working tirelessly with other charities to come up with a better solution to help prevent this epidemic from continuing. Personally, we believe our "Mobile Outreach Team" is really making a difference and everyday it helps our uniformed heroes live a better way of life.

The first thing we learned is to lose your "EGO" and seek out other groups and organizations that are looking to save lives. Then we find the right volunteers who are committed and dedicated with being a mentor to a person in crisis. Volunteers are extremely valuable because they want to be there, and they usually care more than the people who get paid for their services.

To date, we have been able to change and save countless lives because of the incredible commitment from the volunteers and other supporting groups.

Our approach is to aggressively seek out and contact a veteran or first responder in crisis. Our goal is to immediately work on building trust by being completely honest with the person in crisis. Using our network is wonderful, but it's more important to show the person in need that

we are there for them and won't give up. Usually, we go out and meet with those in crisis and spend whatever time is needed to help them get in a better frame of mind. Bottom line "Human Contact" and "Friendship" is the key to saving a life.

Our Mobile Outreach Team is unique because it consists of mentors from all over the state that are willing to do whatever it takes to save and change a life.

If you are interested in joining our team please feel free to contact me at (973)-332-1556 or email mdbollio@optonline.net. To learn more visit njvn.org.

About New Jersey Veterans Network

We are a group of veterans and volunteers dedicated to helping our veterans and their families live better lives. Our team is raising awareness of our veterans needs by organizing public speaking engagements, meeting with business and political leaders across the state and sponsoring fundraising events. Our mission is to identify veterans and connect them with resources and programs designed to meet their unique set of needs. To ensure that EVERY single one of our veterans, who have sacrificed so much for this great country, receives the resources that they require and deserve. If you are interested in joining our team, would like us to speak at your event, or contributing to our mission, call 973-332-1556 or email mdbollio@optonline.net. To learn more visit njvn.org.



(above) Operation Rebound is one of the outreach programs of the New Jersey Veterans Network. It is a mobile outreach team of mentors who help at-risk veterans and first responders to live a better life. The team has made huge strides with suicide prevention simply by building trust and cementing friendships with people in need. It's most important to be honest with each person in crisis and follow up with ways to help them regain purpose in life. Setting goals motivates them to stay on a positive track. If you are interested with joining the Operation Rebound Racing Team please feel free to contact Michael Boll at mdbollio@optonline.net or call 973-332-1556.

JAGDEEP SINGH BHATIA AWARDED SECOND PLACE IN REGENERON SCIENCE TALENT SEARCH

Submitted by Denis Kelly

Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Class of 2020 graduate Jagdeep Bhatia has won the second place prize in the 79th Regeneron Science Talent Search, and in so doing, he has been awarded \$175,000 in prize money.

Bhatia plans to continue his education at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, Mass., and he plans to apply the prize money toward his continuing education.

He has said he plans to study Computer Science in college, and perhaps later pursue a Ph.D or a more entrepreneurial tract.

"We are tremendously proud of all of Jagdeep's accomplishments, including this latest well-deserved recognition," said WHRHS Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Jewett. "He has left an indelible mark on the WHRHS school community. I eagerly anticipate learning about his continued achievement throughout his future educational and professional journey."

The Talent Search winners were announced as part of a virtual awards ceremony in July, where more than \$1.8 million was awarded to 40 finalists across the country. They were "evaluated based on the scientific rigor of their projects, their exceptional problem-solving abilities and their potential to become scientific leaders," according to the announcement from the talent search organizers. Bhatia says that "the three days of virtual judging were nerve-racking but fun. The best part was getting to know the other finalists. It feels amazing to receive recognition for my work, and I'd like to thank all the people who inspired me and guided me in my research."

The Regeneron Science Talent Search is a science and mathematics competition for high school seniors. Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is an American biotechnology company headquartered in Tarrytown, N.Y.

According to the Regeneron press release, Bhatia, 18, of Green Brook Township, earned this honor for solving an open problem and "developing two fast and simple machine learning algorithms for computer programs that are attempting to learn new concepts under the tutelage of an instructor, either a computer or human. His Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms do not only ask random questions but, like a savvy detective, ask just the right ones. His AI algorithms could help train robots and other automated devices faster and easier." Bhatia's research has the potential to solve some of the most pressing problems in machine learning.

Earlier this year, Bhatia provided a more detailed description of his project. Its title is: "Simple and Fast Algorithms for Interactive Machine Learning with Random Counter-Examples."

Bhatia explained that the current processes of training machines – what is generally thought of as "Artificial Intelligence" – tend to be slow, requiring a lot of data.

"This is why robots still seem so primitive in their thinking and understanding, and my project tries to solve that," he said, "tries to make the whole process more data efficient. My research asserts that there is a more data efficient way to train machines, which I prove using mathematics." A future application of these algorithms may be robotics, "where a surgical robot adapts to an individual's anatomy, or where a factory robot learns a human's habits and patterns so that the two can work effectively together."

While at WHRHS, Bhatia was President of the Computer Science Club, which has included, among other things, helping to organize and stage the WHRHS "HillsHacks" Hackathons the last two years. He and the Class of 2020 Salutatorian Mayur Sharma, gave leadership to that program. The day-long program, held this year on Sunday, February 23, just weeks before the COVID Pandemic forced the 4-month school closing and shift to Distance Learning, attracted scores of computer-interested students, from grade school-age through high school-age from around the North Jersey region, and involving a core of WHRHS computer-interested WHRHS students as peer leaders led by Bhatia and Sharma.

In addition, Bhatia was president of the WHRHS Math Team, and a four-year athlete on the WHRHS Cross Country Team.

At the annual Senior Awards Ceremony for the Class of 2020, held virtually in June, Bhatia was recognized for having won the Class of 2020 "Excellence in Mathematics and Computer Science Award."

First place honors in the Regeneron Science Talent Search went to Lillian Petersen of Las Alamos, N. M., who earned \$250,000 for her entry, inventing a simple tool for predicting harvests early in the growing season. The Regeneron release explained that her project helps to improve food distribution planning and offers a promising resource to those working to address global food insecurity. Other Top Ten winners earned from between \$150,000 to \$40,000 for their project entries.



(above) WHRHS Class of 2020 graduate Jagdeep Bhatia of Green Brook, won second place prize in the nation's oldest and most prestigious science fair competition.

Photo by WHRHS

In addition, the competition also recognized another 30 entrants from across the country, who each earned \$25,000 for their projects. Each year, around 2,000 student submit original research in critically important scientific fields of study and are judged by leading experts in their fields.

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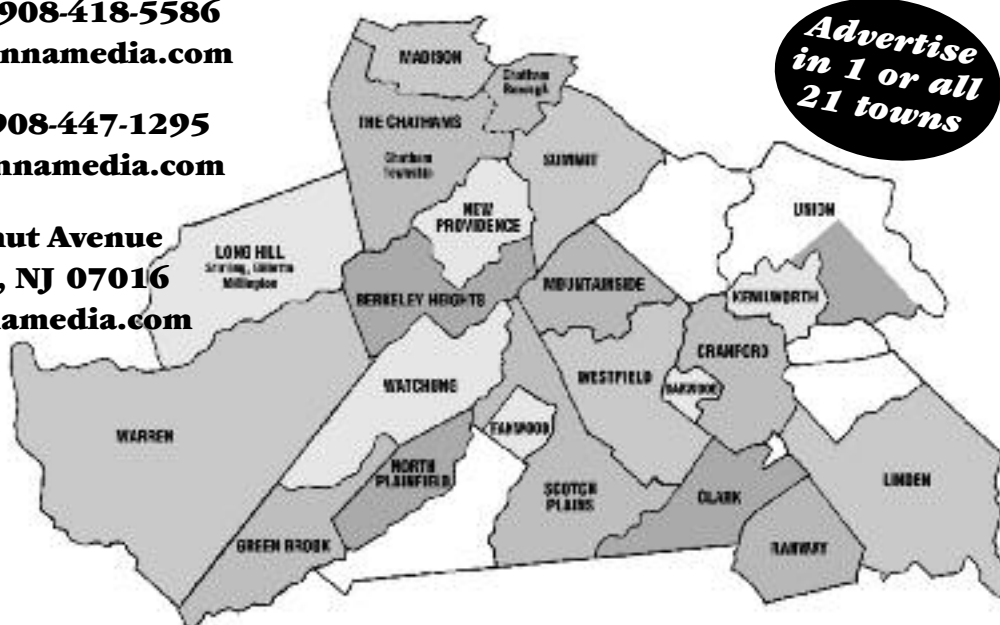
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