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Issue 138 • May 2022

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A NEW KIND OF VETERANS' EVENT

Submitted by Jesus Alejandro MiroQuesada

The New Jersey Veterans Network (NJVN) has a different way of reaching out to veterans and they proved this during their recent NJVN Veterans Salute event, a joint venture between the NJVN and the State VFW. NJVN Director Frank "Doc" Schupp and President Michael Boll treated NJ veterans to an event filled with enjoyable times, hot meals, free business attire, and resources for our state's heroes.

As you walked into the large room at VFW 2433 in Union Township, NJ, there were dozens of veterans smiling and mingling

while DJ Doc Bear (an army veteran) played some tunes. The usual serious tone of similar events was replaced with a feeling of fun, comradery and comfort.

Air Force Veteran Cristina Lozada said "This event provided an outlet for these veterans to be themselves and have fun in an environment with like-minded individuals. I saw firsthand how taking the time to give back really impacted these veterans lives by feeling cared for and acknowledged."

While waiting their turn to choose their clothing from an attic full of free apparel, veterans partook in video games, card games, and Army vs Navy, and Air Force vs Marines chess games. Delicious pizza was available from nearby Reggio's Pizza which was sponsored by NJVNs partner JM Rodgers. With impressive skill, local barber Emilio of Signature Barbers of Elizabeth, NJ cut veteran's hair free of charge. Volunteers, vets, and family members all enjoyed themselves side by side while honoring our brave men and women.

When asked about the event, organizer Doc Schupp explained, "We wanted to make it a point to create an atmosphere where vets can have fun while receiving resources; this way instead of feeling anxious and uncomfortable, they are relaxed while speaking to service providers."

The Veteran Salute program had plenty of community support as representatives from the MOVES program, Vet Center, VFW, American Legion and New Bridge Medical Center were on







hand to talk to veterans. The atmosphere was a very relaxed as vets interacted with service providers over games and refreshments.

Camillo Vanegas of the MOVES program was on hand to discuss their veteran job placement program. American Legion Commander Dennis Duddie listened respectfully to veterans' stories and advised them of various local programs. The Vet Center was on hand to answer questions about counseling and case management. Bergen New Bridge Medical Center set up a table explaining their many veteran assistance programs. FDU's internship program.

Volunteers included the Union High School ROTC, 5-year-old Vickie Almanazar volunteered alongside her father Daniel, Army veteran Uncle Homer, and many more served food, helped with clothing distribution, entertained, or just visited with the veterans while listening to their stories.

Army recruit Miss Matias, who was shipping out to basic training shortly, was on hand to volunteer and shared her thoughts, "The Veterans Salute event was so successful. We helped a lot of people and touched so many lives. Sometimes all a person needs are a warm smile and friendly conversation to take their mind of their troubles, even if only for a moment."

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 mission is to identify veterans and connect them with resources and programs designed to meet their unique set of needs. If you are interested in joining our team, would like us to speak at your event, or contribute to our mission, call 973-332-1556 or email mdbollio@optonline.net. To learn more visit njvn.org.



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BIKE RODEO - MAY 21

Township of Union

parking lot behind Town Hall on Saturday, May 21 to participate in the 2nd Annual Union Bike Rodeo from 8 to 11 a.m.

all ages and their families.

The route will begin behind Town Hall, 1976 Bring your bicycles and head over to the Morris Avenue, where the Union Police Department will be on hand providing free helmets, giveaway bags, water bottles, and more.

Throughout the Bike Rodeo route, there will The Bike Rodeo is free and open to youth of be water and snack stations in addition to stations.





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NEW UNION SENIOR CENTER OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

The Township of Union celebrated the grand opening of its new Senior Center, located at 652 Rahway Avenue, with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, March 30.

Mayor Manuel Figueiredo, the Township Committee, and Senior Center staff were joined by almost 200 township senior residents and community members for the event.

"Our Senior Center is a hub for the community," said Mayor Manuel Figueiredo. "It represents a safe place for our "golden age" community to engage."

The new 11,000sq.ft. Union Senior Center room for all senior programs. location will provide social and educational activities, low-impact physical fitness classes, and other programs. The new location also

features new offices, a health and wellness room, a quiet room for reading or just relaxing, card and computer rooms, a large billiards hall, an upgraded kitchen, and a brand new meeting

For more information, please contact the senior center at 908.851.5290 or by visiting uniontownship.com.



Photo by Township of Union



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GOLD AWARD GIRL SCOUT HELPS WOMEN IN NEED

Submitted by GSHNJ

empower each other, great things happen.

That's why Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey (GSHNJ) Girl Scout Ashley-Marie Neto, a senior at Union High School, decided to focus her Girl Scout Gold Award Project on helping women in local shelters.



(above, l-r) Ashley-Marie Neto, and Lillian Ribeiro, YWCA counselor.

Courtesy photo

We all know that when women support and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the most prestigious award a Girl Scout can earn. It recognizes girls who demonstrate extraordinary effort in developing sustainable solutions for problems facing our world.

> Through a website she created on her own, Ashley-Marie worked to educate and bring awareness of domestic violence to the community. You can find her website here https://femininehygienefordvsurvivors.weebly.co m/about.html.

> Ashley-Marie also recognized the need for feminine hygiene products in surrounding women's shelters and decided to create and provide kits filled with reusable feminine products. The kits were completed with an instruction manual on how to make and care for reusable feminine sanitary pads.

> The YWCA Union County Domestic Violence Shelter has been instrumental in promoting the project by providing access to Ashley-Marie's website and by distributing materials to make the

"As a young female, I am determined to help, support, and empower other females," Ashley-Marie said. "My goal is to make people aware of some of the dynamics involved in domestic violence and to assist the women in shelters. I also hope that providing these women with kits will help them financially. They can use the money saved towards other necessities, like food."

Ashley-Marie has been part of Girl Scouts

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the pinnacle of Heart of New Jersey Troop 20926 for 12 years.

"Being a Girl Scout provides me with the opportunity to help and educate people, learn new things, create healthy relationships, develop life skills, and make a difference in the world," she said.

"It is so wonderful to see our Gold Award Girl Scout using her project as a way to support women within her community," added GSHNJ CEO Natasha Hemmings. "GSHNJ is an organization based on women supporting women and Ashley-Marie's project is a perfect example of that."

ABOUT GIRL SCOUT HEART OF NEW JERSEY

Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey (GSHNJ) believes in the power of every girl. Our leadership program is designed to help a girl discover who she is, what she can do, and connects her with a powerful community of girls and mentors to make it happen. With unique opportunities, Girl Scouts explore, learn, succeed and take action to make a difference in their community. Providing nearly 12,000 New Jersey girls access to premier leadership programs and mentors throughout Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Somerset, Union, southern Warren, and parts of Middlesex counties, GSHNJ offers girls a chance to practice a lifetime of leadership. GSHNJ has two service centers located in North Branch and Westfield, and operates three summer camps: Camp Hoover in Middleville, NJ, Camp DeWitt in Hillsborough, NJ, and The OVAL in Maplewood, NJ. To volunteer, reconnect, donate, or join, please visit gshnj.org.

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FOOD TRUCK FEST & INFLATABLE VILLAGE

The Township of Union is excited to bring back the Annual Food Truck Fest and Inflatable Village scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2022 at Rabkin Park from 2 - 7 p.m.

The event will feature various inflatables and game trailers for children of all ages, live entertainment, a variety of food trucks, a beer garden and more.

Food trucks and entertainment will be held at the DPW parking lot. Inflatables will be held at Rabkin Park. The beer garden, located inside the DPW parking lot, will feature beer, wine, and sangria.

Entrance Fee: \$5 per person (CASH ONLY!) FREE for Children 5 or younger

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UNION ROTARY CLUB DISTRIBUTES DICTIONARIES TO STUDENTS

Submitted by Kathy Arminio

The Union Rotary Club recently donated dictionaries, one to every third-grade student, in the Township of Union. Members of the Union Rotary labeled and delivered the dictionaries to students in the six elementary schools in the township. The Rotary members spent time with the students to explain the use of the dictionary and to share the purpose of the Rotary Club with the third graders.

The Dictionary Project, whose goal is to improve reading and comprehension across the United States and the world, has distributed over 14 million dictionaries to students since 1995.

Rotary is the world's oldest and largest service organization of its kind that participates in community projects, locally, nationally and internationally. Those interested in learning about the Rotary Club of Union can visit unionrotary.org.



(above) Union Rotary Club members recently visited third grade class rooms and distributed dictionaries to students.



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SAVE THE DATE: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 65TH ANNUAL GALA - JUNE 22

Union Township Chamber of Commerce

"FORWARD. TOGETHER." This is the theme of the Union Township Chamber of Commerce's 65th Annual Gala, scheduled for Thursday evening, June 22, at the Galloping Hill Caterers in Union. BCB Community Bank of Union has signed on again as the Major Event Sponsor, and Sharon Patel of Patel Printing Plus is Chair of the event.

The event will feature a number of awards to be given to various business and community groups, including: "President's Award" to Trinitas Regional Medical Center/Trinitas Health Foundation; the "James T. Schaefer Civic Award" to Marie and Joe Canarelli of the DMK Scholarship Fund; "the You ARE the Chamber Award" to Patty Inghilleri of Café Z and Donna Steinmetz of Spartan Detective Agency; the George Thomas Spirit of Union Award to Sally

Straus, "resident extraordinaire" and Annie Moses, of the Union Schools System (retired); and Business of the Year Awards to Shop Rite of Union, Insurance Associates Plus and Sisbarro Towing and Recovery.

"After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Chamber is celebrating the fact that its members have survived, thrived and continued to grow," said Chamber CEO James Masterson. "We are grateful to BCB Bank for their continued generosity as the Event Sponsor and we also salute all our honorees for their dedication to the Union business and civic communities. We believe that after all that we have been through that there is no way to move except forward, together!"

In addition, the following individuals will be installed as officers for the coming year: President – Marie Maguire, BCB Community

Bank; Senior Vice President - Claudia Schiavone, Northfield Bank; Immediate Past President – David Arminio, Friends of the Union Library; Vice President of Programming -Sharon Patel, Patel Printing Plus; Vice President, Finance - Julie D'Aloia, Connect One Bank; Vice President Membership - Joseph Stamp one, Major Printing Company; and Vice President of Business Support and Engagement - Jeff Morton of Shake A Paw Center for Rescue and Adoption. Additionally, Jodi Pelano, of the Wellness Branch Executive Center/Gateway Family YMCA is being installed as a new Director.

Masterson added that the Chamber is currently accepting ticket reservations, sponsorships, and door prize donations for the event. To participate, contact him by calling 908-688-2777, or by emailing executivedirector@unionchamber.com.



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"A BRONX TALE" IS COMING TO CDC THEATRE

The musical "A Bronx Tale", the final show in CDC Theatre's 103rd season, is in rehearsal and getting ready to open June 10.

Based on the critically acclaimed play that inspired the now classic film, this streetwise musical will take you to the stoops of the Bronx in the 1960s—where a young man is caught between the father he loves and the mob boss he'd love to be. Featuring a book by Academy Award nominee Chazz Palminteri, music by Oscar, Grammy, and Tony Award winner Alan Menken, and lyrics by Grammy Award winner and Oscar and Tony Award nominee Glenn Slater, "A Bronx Tale" is a story about respect, loyalty, love, and above all else: family.

Director Sean Lough describes the show as "taking place on the streets in the 1960s, with all the pop styles of the time: Doo-wop, Frank Sinatra-style ballads, R&B and Motown.

Even though it's set in The Bronx, it's a very New Jersey show. The musical started at the Paper Mill Playhouse then moved to Broadway. We're honored to be the first NJ community theatre group to get to perform it after the smash Broadway run."

The show will run June 10-25, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee on June 19th. Tickets can be purchased by visiting cdctheatre.org. Made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

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SHINING STARS TO PRESENT "GREATEST HITS"

The Shining Stars are back! Celebrating 10 years on the stage, the talented special needs cast will be presenting "The Greatest Hits" — covering many of the memorable performances over the past decade.

The outdoor show will take place on the campus of Woodbridge High School, located at 1 Samuel Lupo Way, Woodbridge, on Saturday, May 14, 2022 at 5 p.m. There will be food trucks, a tricky tray and a 50/50 raffle.

"It's hard to believe it's been ten years, but it's been an incredible journey," noted Shining Stars Network Founder and Show Director Sally Curci. "We continue to be inspired by our performers every day. Their passion, dedication and talent is what makes our shows come to life."

The Shining Stars have performed in front of audiences of 1,000 or more, with cast members from seven different counties performing over the years. The Cranford-based organization still has many Cranford residents, but is open to anyone who wants to experience the performing arts.

"We're all about inclusion and opportunity while building self-esteem and creating friendships," said Shining Stars Network Founder and President Mike Curci. "There have been so many incredible performances over the years and we can't wait to see our stars shine on stage once again."

Tickets are available by going to ShiningStarsNetwork.org and clicking on the "purchase tickets" page. General admission tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the show. Please bring a folding chair or blanket. Seating boxes are first-come, first-served. Gates open at 4 p.m. Plenty of on-site parking is available. Rain date is May 21st. Any cancellation will be noted at ShiningStarsNetwork.org.

SHINING STARS NETWORK is a non-profit organization based in Cranford, N.J. founded by Sally and Mike Curci that shines the light on the special needs community by creating opportunities in the performing arts, with the goal of building self-confidence and self-esteem while enjoying the experience of performing on stage. In addition, their Shining Stars Ambassadors basketball team travels to play local first responders and organizations while building friendship and understanding. Now entering its 6th year, Camp Shine (for ages 10-20 years) and The Shining Stars Summer Workshop (21 and over performers) are two-week intensive programs open to everyone, including those with developmental disabilities, that will take place August 15-26, 2022. For more information on Shining Stars Network or any of their programs, please visit ShiningStarsNetwork.org or send your email to ShiningStarsNetwork@gmail.com.



(above) Shining Stars, a special needs performing arts group, takes the stage on May 14th. For more information visit ShiningStarsNetwork.org.





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BOY SCOUT CHESS TOURNAMENT RETURNS AFTER TWO YEAR HIATUS

After a two year hiatus due to Covid-19 restrictions the Boy Scouts Annual Chess Tournament in Cranford was back in full swing held on March 26, 2022 at the Cranford Community Center. The event was hosted by the newly configured Pioneer District or the Boy Scouts of America and Sponsored by Renna Media. Tom Andrea, Advisor, Patriots Path Council Chess Club and District Chairman Steve Flood organized the event.

First place winner was Paul Mild of Bound Brook who finished with a perfect score of 4.0, winning all four of his games. Second and third place winners with a score of 3.5, were Paul Rinaldi and Sander Merrick, both from Florham Park.

Thirty contestants participated in the tournament that is organized by Joe Renna of Renna Media, and Tournament Director John Moldovan. This tournament also met the 6a requirement for earning a Chess merit badge.

The Patriot Path Council Chess Club is open to all scouts and potential scouts and is free to join. Currently the club is playing monthly, Saturday morning online chess tournaments, usually the fourth Saturday of the month. There is a signup form to join the club that can be found on their website at 247scouting.com.



(above) Jerry Chen of Union participated in Boy Scouts Chess Tournament.

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UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY MAY EVENTS

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Please note some events are in-person and some virtual through Zoom. Unless otherwise noted.

The World of Disney Music (ZOOM)

Tues., May 3 at 7:00 pm

Library of Congress historian Paul Allen Sonnenfield shares musical memories from the Disney collection.

Meditation (ZOOM)

Thursdays at 11:30 AM

Join Bindu Bhatt for a virtual meditation session. No experience necessary. Bindu has practiced meditation for over 30 years and would like to share her insight with you.

Beginners Flow Yoga (Z00M)

Thursdays at 6:00 pm

This class will lead you through the foundations of yoga postures, body awareness and alignment, relaxation of the mind, and a connection with the breath. You will learn how to improve muscle strength, promote flexibility, and build your own yoga program specific for your mind and body.

Managing Diabetes (Z00M)

Wed., May 11 at 12:00 pm

Receiving a diagnosis of diabetes can feel like being cast out to sea without a boat. We can help. Learn about the digestive process, monitoring and maintaining safe blood sugar levels, healthy eating plans, and managing the emotions surrounding diabetes. Presented by Chelsea Belton, BA, MPH, CHES, and Redeemer Health.

Breaking the Wall of Slavery: An Intro to African American Genealogy (Z00M)

Thurs., May 12 at 7:00 pm

Do you have a family member, friend, or client with an African American ancestor? Many researchers struggle to break through the wall of slavery (pre-1865) and legalized segregation (through the 1960s). We'll share unique resources along with standard censuses, probate, and vital records to identify emancipated slaves and their prior slaveowners.

Home Buyer's Workshop (In-person/Main Library 1060 Stuyvesant Ave)

Tues., May 17 at 6:00 pm

Are you planning to sell your home and want to know more about the process and the current market? Join us for this Seller's Workshop and learn about what it takes to prepare your home in this hot market. Experts include Abbott Group Residential, Keller Williams Premier Properties, Acres Land Title Agency, Guarantee Rates, Pinnacle Home Inspections Plus. Taught by Jennie Preval-Abbott, Real Estate Advisor, Abbott Group Residential. Registration required as space is limited to 20.

Off the Shelf Book Club (ZOOM)

Thur., May 19 at 7:00 pm

New members are always welcome. This month's title is Paris Library by Janet Skeslien Charles.

Hilton Readers Book Discussion Group (In-person at the Vauxhall Branch)

Mon., May 23, at 6:00 PM

Members discuss their favorite books and authors and new members are always welcome. May's title is The Boy from the Woods by Harlan Coben

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP -MAY 17

Are you feeling stressed and alone in trying to cope with the effects of a loved one's mental illness? NAMI Union County's Family Support Group is for family members and caregivers of persons with mental illness. The group is led by NAMI-trained facilitators and is a peer support group that allows participants to gain insight from others facing the same challenges.

Zoom sessions are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 7 - 8:30 p.m. To register, email Denise at: namiunioncounty@yahoo.com with your name, town, and phone number.





SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ MAY SHOW

The Salem Roadhouse Café, located at 829 Salem Rd., Union, NJ, presents the Mark Adamy Band, Saturday, May 14, 2022. The doors open at 7:15 p.m. Admission: \$20, includes show, snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and dessert.

New to the Roadhouse Café, Mark Adamy is a multitalented keyboardist and vocalist who works with artists around the globe as a live performer and recording artist. This includes his own band: The Mark Adamy Band, which is a group of accomplished musicians that has thrilled listeners with its original stylings fusing pop, rock, jazz, R&B, world, and spiritual music.

Mark has enjoyed popularity as a sought-after talent for special events, productions, and performances. Mark has won honors including Entertainer of the Year and Boston Music award nominations. He has shared the stage with greats like Chaka Khan, James Brown, The Four Tops, John-Lee Hooker, Pieces of a Dream, Howard Hewitt, Phil Driscoll, Phil Keaggy, Roger Humphries, and many others. Mark has played in many Broadway productions as well as music directing off-Broadway productions in NYC.

Mark's concert credentials are extensive with

acts such as the Coasters, the Cadillacs, Ink Spots, Jive Five, Silhouettes, Marvellettes, the Charelles, and guitarist Billy Davis. He has jammed with jazz artists such as Warren Hill, Makoto Ozone, Darren Lyons Group, and Lee Robinson at venues ranging from New York's Russian Tea Room and Knitting Factory to Boston's Symphony Hall.

As always, the Salem Roadhouse Café is live, intimate, up front, and personal. All ages are welcome.

ABOUT SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ

It's not "church music." It's music music.

Folks who've come to the Salem Roadhouse Café know that it's a clean, safe place for people who enjoy listening to live music — in a world otherwise filled with clubs and bars. The Roadhouse has always offered its stage to local and independent mainstream musicians. Jazz, rock, folk, and other groups have performed. What's the common thread? They're all great musicians playing the kind of music people like to hear. There's no message, just music.

The Roadhouse started in 2008 by members of Townley Presbyterian Church with a grant from

the Presbytery of Elizabeth. Hey — that's why we're located where we are. The Roadhouse operates as a non-profit that raises funds for several carefully chosen local charities. That's its social mission.

But the many musicians who've played the Salem Roadhouse Café see it as a solid performance venue. They love it because of its special intimacy and great audiences. They say people here "really listen." Ask any of the musicians you meet here — they love to play the Roadhouse, and they want to come back often.

Community Involvement

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. Thousands of dollars have been raised for these deserving charities.









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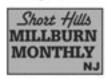
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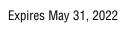
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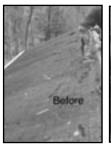


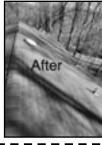
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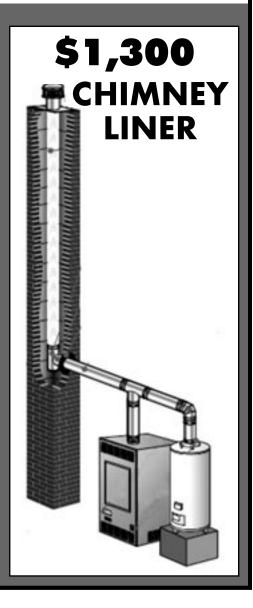
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