

Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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HIP-HOP DANCE BRINGS COMMUNITY, POLICE TOGETHER

Police officers tried to keep up with the children at the annual dance-off between Fanwood and Scotch Plains officers during the regular hip-hop class hosted by the Fanwood Recreation Department at Forest Road Park Tuesday, November 15, 2022.

Fanwood officer Dan Hudspith and Scotch Plains officers Willie DeJesus and Mike Baltazar boldly went where many dare not go--sliding scissors, butt spins, cyphers and posing with the children of Maria Daniel's popular Hip-Hop Experience.

"You can go to every continent and find someone who connects with the hip-hop culture," remarked Daniel. "So it's also a way of unifying the community, connecting, responding and building relationships."

Daniel, an attorney, gave up the courtroom to be a dance instructor. Though she still teaches law at Union County and Hudson County Colleges, dance is her main passion in life, one she appreciated more after a bout with Lyme disease that caused near-paralysis in her legs. During her recovery, she realized dancing was her true calling.

"I was no longer an attorney who danced. I'm a dancer who's an attorney."

The Fanwood and Scotch Plains police officers added a measure of excitement for the children in the class and their parents. Seeing the cops in full uniform attempting the sometimes daunting hip-hop moves was quite an equalizer on the dance floor. The final dance-off between Scotch Plains officer DeJesus and Fanwood officer Hudspith was a modest affair, eclipsed by the larger messages of community outreach, fun and diversity.



(above) Officer Hudspith's ending pose

Photos by Tom Kranz

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(above) Group, children, officers and Maria Daniel



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RESCUE SQUAD AUXILIARY HELPS VETS

Scotch Plains NJ WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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Contributing Author: Susan Baldani, a life member of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad.

During the month of October, the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad Auxiliary collected much-needed household items for previously homeless veterans residing at Valley Brook Village on the Veteran's Administrative Campus in Lyons/Basking Ridge, NJ. As usual, the residents of Scotch Plains and Fanwood came through with abundance.

"The community response was extraordinary," says Lila Maxwell, who is the co-president of the Auxiliary along with Judy Sullivan. "We were very grateful that our veterans were remembered and honored for their service as demonstrated by the strong support from the community."

On Sunday, November 5, members of the Auxiliary and the Rescue Squad were onsite at Valley Brook to distribute laundry soap, dish soap, surface cleaners, toilet paper, toilet wipes, paper towels, coffee, ShopRite gift cards and other items to some of the 112 men and women residing at the independent living community.

The veterans would like to pass along their heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated. These very deserving heroes are always grateful for people giving their time and money to make their lives just a little bit easier.

Adds Lila, "On behalf of the Auxiliary, I want to extend to the community our thankfulness and appreciation for their support."

The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad Auxiliary meets once a month, and its grass roots function is to assist the Squad in many capacities – from

holding fundraisers and providing meals during crises to performing outreach to squad and fellow auxiliary members. Members also attend town functions, such as fairs, concerts and holiday events, in order to connect with the community and promote Squad interest.

If interested in becoming a member of the Auxiliary, go to scotchplainsrescuesquad.com/the-auxiliary/. For more information on helping the veterans at Valley Brook Village, contact Steve Hackenberg at 908-723-0788 or at dnea117@gmail.com.



(above) On Sunday, November 5, members of the Auxiliary and the Rescue Squad were onsite at Valley Brook to distributed donations to some of the 112 men and women residing at the independent living community.

Courtesy photo

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SHINING STARS “CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR” – DEC. 9

Celebrate the holiday season when the Shining Stars take the stage for their 2022 “Christmas Spectacular” set for Friday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. The show will take place on the main stage at the historic Union County Arts Center in Rahway as this talented cast sings and dances to many of your holiday favorites.

With many cast members from all over Union County and beyond, Shining Stars Network has been producing live programming for the special needs community for ten years.

This year’s Christmas Spectacular marks the return of the Shining Stars to one of the most beautiful theaters in New Jersey and will feature 35 special needs cast members and their volunteer buddies from local high schools, who serve as mentors to the cast during rehearsals.

Two previous Shining Stars shows at UCPAC drew more than 1,000 audience members for each performance, and already, the buzz is building in the community.

“We’re so excited to ring in the holiday season,” noted Shining Stars Network co-founder and President Mike Curci. “Our stars are ready to share their smiles, energy and amazing talents with everyone. This will be a great way to cap off our 10th anniversary celebration.”

“We strongly believe in creating an inclusive environment for our cast, and our buddies are an integral part of the Shining Stars experience,” noted Shining Stars co-founder and director Sally



(above) The Shining Stars will take the stage for their 2022 “Christmas Spectacular” on Friday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Curci. “We are so excited to bring a new show to the stage and cannot wait to connect with our incredible audience again to celebrate the holiday season.”

Shining Stars Network is wrapping up a big year, which included their annual “Evening of Shining Stars” Spring Show, Summer Performing Arts Workshop, and their successful Paper Mill Playhouse debut performing in front of a sold-out audience at the Paper Mill Brook Side Cabaret.

“Shining Stars Network is not only about performing, but more importantly we’re about building self-confidence and self-esteem,” said Shining Stars co-director Nicole Greene. “Our cast members are not only talented, but inspire us every day, and we are all very excited about taking the stage again to share another magical

night with the audience.”

Tickets are on sale now at UCPAC.org. For groups of 10 or more, email shiningstarsnetwork@gmail.com.

The night will also feature a Tricky Tray and 50/50 raffle. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m.

Shining Stars Network is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization based in Cranford, N.J. that offers opportunities in the performing arts for the special needs community.

Plans for the 2023 season include their 2nd “Reach for the Stars” Gale, set for March 14 at the elegant Park Chateau Estate & Gardens in East Brunswick.

For more information on Shining Stars Network or to make a donation, please visit shiningstarsnetwork.org.

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LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Thursday, December 1, 7pm
Understanding My Teen

A virtual program with social worker Karen Mitchell. Learn more about the biology behind your teenager's behavior and reframe the question of "what's wrong" into "what's happening".

Friday, December 2, 10am to Noon
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Monday, December 5, 10am
BRING YOUR OWN BOOK

An informal discussion of what participants have recently read and enjoyed. This discussion will take place outside the Library, weather permitting. If weather is inclement, the discussion will move to Zoom.

Thursday, December 8, 7pm
**THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS:
RECKONING AND RECLAIMING.**

A virtual presentation of the New-York Historical Society's exhibition.

Thursday, December 15, 7pm
EVENING BOOK CLUB

Will meet virtually to discuss Beartown by Fredrik Backman.

Monday, December 19, 7:30pm
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Will meet inside the Library.

Tuesday, December 20, 1pm
AFTERNOON BOOK CLUB

Will discuss Lost in Yonkers by Neil Simon. This discussion will take place inside the Library.

**Saturday, December 24 through Monday,
December 26 - Library Closed**

Registration is required for all virtual programs. More information about the library can be found at www.scotlib.org.

PONZIO'S CELEBRATING 109 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Submitted by Andrew Ponzio

Ponzio's is the oldest family owned and operated business in Scotch Plains, NJ.

My great-grandfather Mateo Ponzio emigrated from Italy in the early 1900's and began operating Ponzio's at its current location, 211 Union Ave., in 1913, selling hay, feed, and firewood. He also did some hauling.

Where the florist is located today was once a general store/boarding house that sold tea, candy, tobacco and other items. A greenhouse was added. The florist began in the 1940's under my grandparents Grace and Rocco Ponzio.

My father, Carmen Ponzio worked and operated the florist for 66 years (since he was 10), until he passed away in October 2022 at the age of 76.

Currently, I own and operate the firewood, landscape, and garden center, and my mother, Arlene Ponzio now continues to operate the florist.

Ponzio's have also been selling Christmas trees, handmade grave covers, and wreaths during the holiday season for many years. We also retail plants, candles, firewood accessories, camping and fishing supplies, as well as live bait -nightcrawlers for fishing.

It's a labor of love. The best part is when customers return to share a story of Ponzio's Florist having been a part of their lives through a prom, wedding, or funeral arrangement.

(right) Mateo Ponzio emigrated from Italy in the early 1900's and began operating Ponzio's at its current location, 211 Union Ave., in 1913.



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TICKETS NOW ON SALE FOR 24TH ANNUAL PIPES OF CHRISTMAS

The Pipes of Christmas will celebrate its 24th joyous season with performances in New Jersey and New York this December. The holiday favorite opens on Saturday, December 17 at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, located at 921 Madison Avenue (at 73rd Street) for two performances at 2 and 7PM. The concert moves across the Hudson River on Sunday, December 18 to Central Presbyterian Church located at 70 Maple Street in Summit, NJ also with performances at 2 and 7PM.

For those weary of the ceaseless stream of secular seasonal music from department stores to TV, the Pipes of Christmas offers a spiritual and traditional take on the season that connects concertgoers to the holiday in a fresh, meaningful way. The show features tunes such as, "Highland Cathedral," "Joy to the World", and "Amazing Grace", all performed live on pipes and drums, harp and fiddle, and organ and brass and more. Not only does the performance define Christmas cheer, but also it inspires those of Celtic descent to retrace and reconnect to their ancestry.

According to producer Robert Currie, "We are absolutely delighted to be bringing our concert back to full force after two devastating years weathering the Covid pandemic. Supporting our GoFundMe campaign will continue to make these concerts possible."

The 2022 production marks the NYC solo debut of soprano Sharon Lyons originally from Dublin, Ireland.

The concert presents the music of Christmas accompanied by readings taken from the Celtic literature of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In addition to Ms. Lyons, featured performers include James Robinson from the film "Braveheart," New England fiddle champion Paul Woodiel, champion harpist Rachel Clemente, and the Pipe Major Kevin Ray Blandford Memorial Pipe Band from Redlands, CA among many more.

PROCEEDS SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIPS AND MORE

Proceeds from the concert support an extensive music scholarship program, which include annual gifts to the National Piping Centre and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (both located in Glasgow, Scotland) the Gaelic College of Nova Scotia and the Carol Hassert Memorial Fine Arts Scholarship at Summit (NJ) High School.

Proceeds also support the annual Tartan Day on Ellis Island celebration and the Society's sponsorship of the US National Scottish Harp Championship, the Gaelic Literature Competition at Scotland's Royal National Mod, and an academic research prize at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scotland's Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye.

Each year, concert highlights are webcast in hi-definition over the Christmas holiday to a global audience in cooperation with HomeTowne Television. In addition to winning multiple Telly Awards for broadcast production excellence, the 2020 virtual concert was a finalist for the coveted MG Alba Trad Music Award presented annually in Scotland.

The concert is still accepting Title Sponsors as well as Program Ads. These gifts help offset production expenses and add help fund our scholarships.

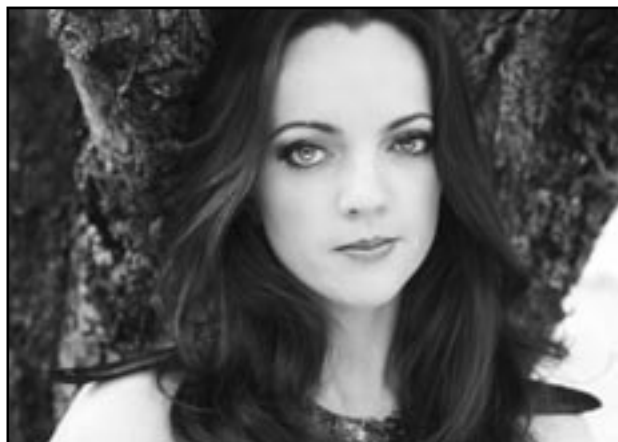
TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW

Tickets may be purchased online exclusively through ShowTix4U at www.showtix4u.com (be certain you select the event name and date in the search engine). Reserved patron seats are available at both venues.

ABOUT "THE PIPES OF CHRISTMAS"

Since making its debut in 1999, The Pipes of Christmas has played to standing room only audiences. Now a cherished holiday event, the concert provides audiences with a stirring and reverent celebration of the Christmas season and the Celtic spirit. Audience-goers return year after year to experience the program, many reporting that the Pipes of Christmas has become part of their family's annual Christmas tradition.

The concert has been lavished with critical acclaim. In his review for Classical New Jersey Magazine, Paul Somers wrote, "The whole evening was constructed to introduce gem after gem and still have a finale which raised the roof. In short, it was like a well-constructed fireworks show on the Glorious Fourth. The Westfield Leader described the concert as "a unique sound of power and glory nowhere else to be found."



(above) Soprano Sharon Lyons originally from Dublin, Ireland, will make her NYC solo debut at the 2022 Pipes of Christmas concerts in NY and NJ.



(above) Pipers from the Kevin Ray Blandford Memorial Pipe Band are returning to the East Coast this December to join the company of the 24th annual "Pipes of Christmas" concerts.

THE PIPES OF CHRISTMAS
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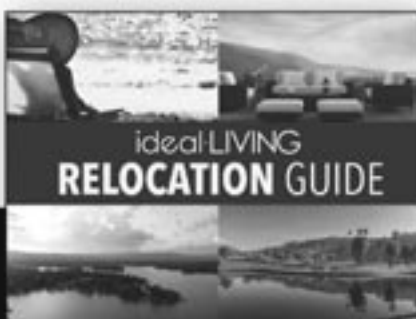
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UNICO COLUMBUS DAY

Submitted by Daniela Sellinger

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of UNICO celebrated the voyages of Italian immigrants to America, the Italian heritage and Italian traditions during its annual Columbus Day Ceremony. The ceremony was held on October 8, 2022, at Alan M. Augustine Park In Scotch Plains, just steps from the Columbus Monument.

This year, our guest speakers were Dori Perrucci and Laura Swidersky. Both shared stories of their ancestors who immigrated to Scotch Plains, NJ, and shared their own experiences of growing up as Italian-Americans. Laura Swidersky was born and raised in Scotch Plains and still resides there today. Dori has written a book about her grandfather Concezio Perrucci's journey from Abruzzo to America and is waiting for it to be published!

Dr. Matt Marino, a chapter member, was our Master of Ceremonies. Among those in attendance were Scotch Plains Mayor Josh Losardo, Scotch Plains Town Manager Al Mirabella, Town Council members, UNICO National Vice President Anthony Bencivenga, members from our chapter and other local chapters as well as many residents.

Thanks to all those who came out to support us. A huge thank you to our Columbus Day committee members and township staff who assisted in making this a successful event.



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS OF ITALIAN DESCENT

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of UNICO, a local Italian-American service organization, is dedicated to helping local students maximize their talent and potential through educational pursuits. In the 49 years since our Chapter began, our organization has offered scholarships to graduating high school seniors. This year, our chapter will be offering four \$2,500 scholarships.

All graduating high school seniors of verifiable Italian heritage who plan to attend a post-secondary vocational, technical or trade school, a 2-year community college, or a 4-year college/university are encouraged to apply!

Applicants must reside in Scotch Plains or Fanwood to be considered for an award. (Exception: Children of SP-F UNICO members in good standing have no residency requirements.) Awards are based on a combination of financial need, extracurricular activity and civic involvement, and academic excellence.

Please visit our Scholarship Program page at unicospf.org for full requirements and to apply. Applications are due March 1, 2023.

Questions may be directed to our scholarship chairpersons at spfunicoscholarship@gmail.com.

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If Knee Surgery Sounds Scary, It Should

Have you have been told you are facing knee replacement surgery? Have you been told about all the downsides you could be facing? First and foremost, there are NO guarantees that knee replacement surgery will be the answer to your pain, but let's look further:

- Surgery is costly, regardless of the percentage of services covered by insurance.
- Surgery requires lost time from work and typically requires a regimen of rehabilitation and medications.
- With surgery, there is always a risk for unwelcomed complications. And you could be back to where you started, or worse.
- Medications will be required for relief from surgery and you have been down that road before. Addictions to these pain medications can cause potential side effects, something you do not want to experience.
- Rehabilitation can take years.

Consider This Alternative To Surgery

Northeast Spine & Wellness Center offers you a real opportunity and a painless way to say goodbye to your knee pain without any surgery. Here are just a few of the important benefits you should consider?

- Diagnostic fluoroscopy accurately targets the pain, unlike blind injections.
- Guided fluoroscopic injections are virtually pain free, unlike blind injections.
- No lost time from work or family.
- No expensive or time consuming rehabilitation.
- No potentially addictive prescription medications.
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How Does This New Treatment Work?

Relief begins almost as fast as it takes to pronounce the treatment. It's called Viscosupplementation Therapy. To begin with, it starts with **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** investing in the use of diagnostic fluoroscopy. This enables them to target the exact location of your knee pain with pinpoint accuracy. What follows is a simple injection that causes little to no pain, especially when compared to what you may be living with daily. That explains what you will see on the surface of this revolutionary treatment. What's taking place below the surface is how and where the natural healing process takes place. The injection of a Hyaluronic acid called Hyalgan. This gel-like substance was approved by the FDA in 1996. Hyalgan is a natural substance that mimics the synovial fluid that is already produced by your body in your joints. Osteoarthritis sufferers in particular see a reduction in this much needed synovial fluid in their knee joints. Without that cushioning layer of protection, the cartilage in your knee can begin to wear away leading to the rubbing of bone on bone. Through Viscosupplementation Therapy, this natural substance immediately goes to work reducing the swelling and inflammation in the joint and adding a coating layer of protection. Think about Dorothy taking the oil can to The Tin Man. You'll begin to feel that same kind of relief and quite possibly feel like you're ready for a dance down the yellow brick road to recovery yourself. And with a success rate of over 85% in alleviating pain associated with osteoarthritis, it's easy to see why this treatment is so readily covered by Medicare and by most major insurance providers. Diagnostic fluoroscopy to target the pain. Viscosupplementation Therapy to relieve the pain. Simple, fast and no surgery!

Do you Suffer from any of these Symptoms?

There are a number of reasons why you developed Osteoarthritis pain. It can develop with age or because of heredity. It could be from repetitive stress from a job or some glory days in athletics. Of course your concern is with the symptoms you face daily and how to make them end, hopefully without surgery or the use of potentially addictive medications. **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** understands the symptoms you have been living with and can help. If you have any of the symptoms below, please call us today. Relief is a phone call away.

- **Pain** - Whether it's a sharp aching or maybe a burning sensation, the pain can range from irritating to debilitating.
- **Swelling** - This can cause tenderness and soreness to the entire knee area, making walking or going up and down stairs painful, getting in and out of bed or bathtubs difficult and dangerous just name a few activities affected by swelling.
- **Stiffness** - Getting up out of bed or after sitting for a period of time gets more and more difficult. This loss of mobility can be more than a hindrance. It can be dangerous if you need to move quickly.
- **Loss of muscle strength** - This can lead to balance issues and the strong possibility of falling.
- **Joint deformity** - Not just unsightly, but painful as well.
- **Creaking Joints** - Can be painful and a sign of more discomfort to come.
- **Sleepless nights** - Losing sleep over your suffering is not just irritating, but potentially dangerous because of so many other health concerns that can be affected by loss of sound sleep.

Let Me Show You Targeted Relief From Your Knee Pain

Every day, I see patients suffering from knee pain due to arthritis, osteoarthritis, sports injuries or other conditions. Many have been told that they are in need of knee replacement surgery. Other patients say they have been prescribed various prescription medications to deal with the pain.

Something else I see almost every day, are patients that have tried viscosupplementation knee injections elsewhere and found it to be a painful and ineffective experience because the injections were not administered using fluoroscopic guidance. Instead of using the incredibly accurate diagnostic fluoroscopy we use at **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** these patients experienced a blind injection technique, which can be as inaccurate as playing pin the tail on the donkey.

Once I am able to explain to my patients about the pin point accuracy of using diagnostic fluoroscopy and the amazing results viscosupplementation can provide, they are thrilled to get started. They are even more thrilled when they feel the relief. Please contact **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** today to schedule your RISK FREE consultation. Call 732-827-0800

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"Over 85% relief for the first time in 15 years, suffering with knee pain. My life is getting back to normal." - Perry O.

"After only four visits, I have absolutely no pain! The staff is 'top-notch'." - Question L.

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TINY TIM FUNDRAISER NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The Tiny Tim Fund is a registered New Jersey non-profit corporation 501(c)(3) that raises funds to provide financial assistance to help families pay for the medical expenses of children in Fanwood and Scotch Plains including doctors, dentists, and psychological testing. The organization has been assisting local families since 1983.

This year the Tiny Tim Fund is hosting Carol Night on December 5 during which volunteers will carol in local neighborhoods requesting donations. Since carol groups will not be able to reach all neighborhoods in Fanwood and Scotch Plains, letters requesting financial support will also be distributed to local neighborhoods during the month of December. Donations for this year's fundraiser are being requested during the current holiday season and are greatly appreciated all year long. Carol Night and the letter campaign will be the organization's sole fundraiser.

The Tiny Tim Fund is administered by a volunteer Board of Trustees which consists of Fanwood and Scotch Plains citizens from varied sections of the community. There are no administrative fees. All collected contributions are dispersed for children's needs.

Donations from local citizens as well as from civic and service organizations will enable the Tiny Tim Fund to continue supporting families in our community. The trustees are hopeful that members of the community who have generously supported the Fund in the past will make it possible for the Tiny Tim Fund to continue providing assistance to current cases as well as to accept new requests for financial assistance during the coming year.

Checks made out to The Tiny Tim Fund can be mailed to The Tiny Tim Fund, PO Box 181, Fanwood, NJ 07023.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Tiny Tim Fund at TinyTimSPF@gmail.com. Questions can also be directed to Barbara Anilo, President, at 732-259-6348



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MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNA LANDS INTERNSHIP IN HOLLYWOOD



(above) Katherine Agnello of Fanwood, a Union County Magnet High School Alumna and current Senior at Temple University, was selected for the prestigious Television Academy Foundation Internship Program.

Courtesy photo

Katherine Agnello of Fanwood, has been selected for the prestigious Television Academy Foundation Internship Program. She is one of just 12 students chosen by Television Academy members from across the country for the 2022 fall program. The Foundation's annual Internship Program provides eight-week paid internships at top Hollywood studios and production companies to college students nationwide.

Agnello is a senior at Temple University studying media studies and production with a minor in screen studies. This fall she is an intern in the scripted television department at EPIX/MGM in Los Angeles, California. Relaunching as MGM+ in January 2023, the MGM-backed premium television network and streaming service provides a variety of content, including the Emmy®-winning series *Godfather of Harlem* and *Chapelwaite*, among others.

While attending Union County Magnet High School in Scotch Plains, Agnello struggled with what career path to take in college. But, encouraged by her mother, she decided to follow her passion for storytelling, moving toward a television career and leading her to where she is today.

"I love storytelling and the impact it has,

specifically on television. I'm constantly inspired by the shows I watch and want to tell stories that help people feel seen," said Agnello. "I'm most excited to learn about the entertainment industry by working with the Television Academy Foundation and am excited to learn about television production and find my place within it."

Interns become lifelong members of the Foundation's alumni family, giving them access to events and networking opportunities as they build their careers in the industry.

ABOUT THE TELEVISION ACADEMY FOUNDATION

Established in 1959 as the charitable arm of the Television Academy, the Television Academy Foundation is dedicated to preserving the legacy of television while educating and inspiring those who will shape its future. Through renowned educational and outreach programs, such as *The Interviews: An Oral History of Television Project*, *College Television Awards and Summit*, *Student Internship and Fellowship Programs* and the *Media Educators Conference*, the Foundation seeks to widen the circle of voices our industry represents and to create more opportunity for television to reflect all of society. For more information on the Foundation, please visit [TelevisionAcademy.com/Foundation](https://www.TelevisionAcademy.com/Foundation).

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HANUKAH: A HOLIDAY OF LIGHTS AND MIRACLES

Submitted by Rabbi Paul David Kerbel

Hanukah is a ‘major’ Jewish holiday. You might be surprised by that. Most rabbis and Jewish educators would say just the opposite, that Hanukah is a ‘minor’ Jewish holiday. From the perspective of religious Jewish law, Hanukah does not have the same religious significance of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (our Day of Atonement and forgiveness), Passover (our Festival of Freedom), Shavuot (the holiday where we celebrate the revelation of the Five Books of Moses), and Sukkot (our Fall festival celebrating the end of the summer harvest and our relationship with God).

Hanukah is a ‘major’ Jewish holiday culturally and ethnically. One of the ways we can understand any religion is not just what the religion ‘teaches’ but what its followers actually observe and practice. More Jews observe Hanukah than any other ritual, other than participating in a Passover Seder. Part of Hanukah’s ‘popularity’ is that it falls in the Jewish calendar between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hanukah represents a powerful response to the feelings of exclusion and of being a minority in the larger Christian culture of America and allows members of the Jewish community to celebrate its own traditions and be proud of the Jewish heritage even as the airwaves, malls and

TV commercials are filled with the sounds and traditions of Christmas.

But regardless of where Hanukah falls in the calendar, I would suggest the following four reasons why Hanukah is a ‘major’ Jewish holiday and has lessons for both Jews and our non-Jewish neighbors to learn from share:

1. Hanukah represents the first victory in human history for religious freedom. Had the Jewish Maccabees not won their war with the Greek/Syrian kingdom, Judaism may have died out and Christianity and Islam, both of which have roots in Judaism, may never have developed. The Jewish people celebrate the value for all of us to celebrate our respective religious traditions.
2. Hanukah teaches us religious tolerance and to celebrate diversity and pluralism. As America becomes more diverse and welcomes citizens of many different religions from around the world, we learn from each other and how much we have in common.
3. Hanukah reinforces the ability and opportunity of each minority to teach, learn and celebrate its religious traditions and its principles and unique ethnic and religious identity while we all share and believe in the values of freedom and democracy.
4. Hanukah reminds us of the modern-day miracles that we have participated in: the redemption of over one million Jews from

the former Soviet Union who were not allowed to learn about their Jewish faith and practice Judaism while under Communist rule; the rescue and welcoming of over 100,000 Jews from Ethiopia and the rescue and of endangered Jews and other Jewish communities around the world. We must always be prepared to deliver the few from the many, the weak from the mighty and the righteous from the wicked.

Finally, I would like to share that the word “Hanukah” means ‘dedication’ and comes from the same Hebrew word as ‘education.’ Hanukah is about making sure that we maintain our Jewish identity, that we teach our children, the values, the history, the rich heritage which is ours to embrace and pass on to the next generation. May the lights of our Hanukah menorah symbolize our love for Judaism, our right to practice Judaism as a minority while at the same time, sharing symbols of light and the theme of miracles with those who celebrate Christmas even as all of us strive to make the world a better place. For our Jewish tradition has taught us this eternal message: “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”

Happy Hanukah and Happy Holidays to all!
Rabbi Paul Kerbel is the spiritual leader of Temple Beth El Mekor Chayim in Cranford and the current chair of the Cranford Clergy Council.

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UNION COUNTY DAY OF PRAYER

On Thursday, October 27, over 130 people attended the Union County Day of Prayer organized by Community Access Unlimited (CAU) and the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council (UCICC).

It was the 8th annual “Day of Prayer” event, hosted by Temple Emanu-El in Westfield. The event featured a variety of inspirational speakers and performers from Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, and Buddhist faiths. The service included a chant from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness of Central New Jersey and musical offerings from Shimon Smith, Cantorial Soloist/Artist in Residence at Temple Emanu-El, who shared Hebrew songs with attendees.

CAU spearheaded UCICC in 2012 to build bonds in the interfaith community and encourage the respect and welcoming of others regardless of faith, sexual orientation, legal status, or ability. CAU is based in Union County and works statewide to assist people with

developmental disabilities and youth at risk to integrate into the community through support services and support coordination. CAU services include housing, education, employment services, behavioral management, advocacy and more.

Rev. LL DuBreuil, who has been a part of UCICC since the first Day of Prayer, said “I was looking for this kind of community because I believe that when we all come together in celebration...then we’re already ready to be together in difficult times. UCICC does not only have these worship experiences, but we sometimes do vigils and marches and we raise money for causes. And it’s because we know each other from this that we can more easily work together when times are more difficult.” DuBreuil is the Interim Pastor of Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, Scotch Plains.

Joyce Cargle, a longtime CAU member, said of the event, “We learned inclusion and we learned about community today.”



(above) The Union County Day of Prayer was held on Thursday, October 27, with over 130 people in attendance.

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ROTARY LUMINARY SALES

During the month of December, the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary club will sell Luminaries at the Fanwood Department of Public Works on Manfra Way, off of North Avenue. The sale dates are December 3, December 10-11, December 17-18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and December 24 – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The luminary kits cost \$1 per kit in all quantities and include paper bags, candles and sand. Customers are encouraged to bring buckets, boxes or plastic bags to transport the sand. Payments can be made by cash, check or Venmo. Contact-less pickup will be available; customers can call the number listed on the whiteboard to place orders or pick up orders.

Pre-orders placed prior to December 5th will be discounted to \$0.75 a kit. See the Rotary website for additional information regarding online purchases: fsprotary.org.

Luminaries are traditionally used to illuminate the streets on Christmas Eve. A candle is nestled in sand at the bottom of a paper bag and placed along sidewalks to create a beautiful walkway. The candles are then lit at dusk on Christmas Eve. Some neighborhoods in the area get together and buy hundreds of kits to create an amazing display.

All proceeds from the sale will be used to fund

the various charitable and humanitarian projects that Rotary supports, both locally and internationally.

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club has been serving the community since 1938. The club meets on Wednesdays at noon at the Stage House Restaurant. On the last Wednesday of the month, the club meets at Darby Road at 6:30 p.m. Guests are invited to attend and learn about the good that Rotary is doing worldwide. For further information about the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary club, go to fsprotary.org or visit their Facebook page: Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club.

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ROTARY CLUB LUNCH HONORS VETERANS

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club hosted a Veterans Appreciation Lunch at their meeting held on November 16, 2022. 16 Veterans from Fanwood and Scotch Plains attended. They introduced themselves and stated when and

where they served. The Rotary Club is very grateful to all men and women who served the United States Armed Forces and will pay tribute to those who served, those who continue to serve and those who made the ultimate sacrifice.



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Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Holiday Event Schedule 2022

- ♥ Saturday December 10: Mass of Anointing at 11am
- ♥ Friday December 16: Christmas Concert featuring Choirs from St. Helen's & IHM at 7pm @ St. Helen's Church. Westfield
- ♥ December 17-24: Reflections on the O Antiphons Video Release
- ♥ Sunday December 18: Living Nativity + Hot Chocolate with Santa and Holiday Gift Shop (SPF PAL) starting at 1pm
- ♥ Monday December 19: Penance Service at 7pm

Mass Schedule

Mon-Fri: 7am + 8:30am

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Sun: 8am, 10am, 12 noon

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ADOPTION DAY FETES YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE FOR FAMILIES

CASA of Union County

On the morning of Thursday, Nov. 10, children from 18 months to 18 years gathered at the Union County Courthouse surrounded by courthouse staff and judiciary, county commissioners, area organizations and more – all there to celebrate youth reaching the long-awaited end to living in foster care with adoption into a forever family. Family courts see complex issues fraught with loss or discord nearly every day, yet Adoption Day is eagerly anticipated by all, as fresh starts and ample smiles fill the courthouse.

November is National Adoption Month and National Adoption Day, celebrated the Saturday before Thanksgiving, is a national movement to raise awareness of children in foster care awaiting a family. Since its inception in 2000, more than 75,000 children have found permanency on this

day. Still, more than 110,000 youth in the United States need a permanent home and the average wait is four years. More than 23,000 youth nationwide age out of the system each year and must face life on their own.

This year, Union County's celebration came early, but no complaints; it just means children received permanency even sooner. After Judge Daniel Roberts performed the adoption ceremonies, the festivities began: from roving a balloon artist and CASA Volunteer Dina Gharaibeh providing face painting to a musician and more than a dozen superheroes from the Union County Sheriff's Heroes Initiative – the Batmobile even made an appearance – there was nothing but smiles to go around.

Speakers included 17-year-old Maeve Boger-O'Bryan of Cranford and Joseph Coston of Fair

Lawn. Maeve discussed her own open adoption and Joseph shared his story as an adoptive parent of eight youth from the foster system.

CASA of Union County provided family fun baskets with donated board and card games, fleece blankets, jars of popping corn, movie candy and more from David Brearley High School's Bears that Care group, all packed into baskets donated by Cranford Girl Scout Troop 40836. The high school bear mascot also made the rounds, much to the delight of the littlest adoptees and their siblings. In addition, each family received a ShopRite gift card made possible by a Union County Bar Association donation, as well as gifts from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Theta Phi Omega, Phi Eta Omega and Omega Psi Omega chapters.

For details on CASA of Union County and becoming an advocate for a foster youth, contact Chanel at info@casaoofunioncounty.org or log on to www.casaoofunioncounty.org.



(above) Superheroes from the Union County Sheriff's Heroes Initiative.



(above) The Honorable Daniel Roberts, J.S. C. (Adoption Day Judge), with David Brearley High School Bears That Care



(above) Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Dewanna Graham, 1st VP; Liz Nolley Tillman, President; Joyce Hobbs, Secretary;

CRAIG CLARK OF SCOTCH PLAINS CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY OF HIS LIFE-SAVING HEART TRANSPLANT

Craig Clark, 61, is taking time to reflect on the gift of life and the miracle of organ and tissue donation and transplantation as he recently celebrated four years since his life-saving heart transplant. With his health and strength now restored, Craig is living each day to its fullest by enjoying life's precious moments and spending time on his favorite hobbies, including home improvement projects, day trips and travel.

"Each day that I get to travel and spend time with extended family and friends or special events like our children's weddings or the birth of a grandchild, I remember that it was made possible thanks to my organ donor and the care of Susan Pardi, NP, and the amazing transplant team at NYU Langone who kept me alive through heart failure," said Craig.

Now four years post-transplant, Craig is filled with energy and spends as much time as possible with his grandchild. He is also forever mindful of his organ donor who gave him the gift of life. "The only thing that I know about my donor is that he was 51 years old when he passed," said Craig. "My donor or his family's decision to be a donor has essentially given me a new lease on life."

Craig has also made it a priority to advocate for NJ Sharing Network, the nonprofit organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue in the Garden State. By sharing his story with others, Craig hopes to encourage more people to register as organ and tissue donors. "One organ and tissue

donor can save eight lives and enhance the lives of over 75 others," said Craig.

At the age of 17, Craig enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He earned bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice and Art History from Seton Hall University before returning to active military duty as an Artillery Officer. At that time, doctors detected that Craig had a heart murmur, and he was soon diagnosed with cardiomyopathy. Despite his critical health challenges, Craig and his wife, Anna, raised their three children, Adam, Rachel and Nathan, and he enjoyed a successful career in transportation and supply chain management.

As years passed, Craig's heart disease grew progressively worse. He suffered a stroke and his heart stopped beating twice in a two-week period. Craig had a defibrillator implanted, but he was later diagnosed with congestive heart failure (CHF) in 2017. He was added to the heart transplant waiting list. On August 25, 2018, while admitted at NYU Langone, Craig's prayers were answered when he received "the call" from NYU Langone cardiologist Alex Reyentovich, MD that a heart was available for transplant.

"I remember answering the phone was basically the only thing that I had enough strength to do at the time," said Craig. "The next day, I had my transplant. I recovered quickly in the immediate days and weeks after transplant. I was out of the hospital in just seven days!"

Currently, there are over 100,000 Americans – nearly 4,000 of whom live in New Jersey –

waiting for a life-saving transplant, according to United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). However, the generosity of those in the Garden State is providing hope for the future. Organ and tissue donor registrations in the Garden State continue to increase thanks to strong community education and outreach efforts and simplified ways to register. To learn more, get involved and register as an organ and tissue donor, visit www.NJSharingNetwork.org.



(above) Heart transplant recipient Craig Clark of Scotch Plains recently celebrated the four-year anniversary of his life-saving transplant.

Photo courtesy of NJ Sharing Network

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FLINTLOCKS SCOUTER GROUP LIVES BY THE SCOUT LAWS

The Flintlocks, BSA, Inc. are a group of retired scouters who dedicate their time and talents to building and maintaining the scout camps of the Patriot's Path Boy Scout Council in northern New Jersey.

The group includes some tradesmen, but also professionals and volunteers of every background. Most are retired, but some still work full-time, and occasionally people volunteer to help for a day here or there. It is a very friendly group with great camaraderie and a good sense of humor. When one member reached age 100, they designated a parking spot reserved for "all Flintlocks over 100 years old". Two other members are 90 years old, but they will have to wait a while before parking in that spot.

The Flintlocks met for their Fall General Meeting on Thursday, October 20, 2022, at their workshop at Camp Winnebago in Rockaway, NJ. They reviewed the accomplishments of the previous year and discussed future projects the Council needs to have done. Some of the future projects include installing new windows in the dining hall, building a pavilion near the trading post, collecting Toys for Tots; and making craft kits and Pinewood Derby cars for special needs children.

The Patriot's Path Council of the Boy Scouts of America encompasses 5 counties in central and northern New Jersey: Middlesex; Morris, Somerset, Sussex, and Union. The Council

website is ppcbsa.org. There are 11,000 scouts who use the camps in this council.

In spite of their name, the Flintlocks have nothing to do with antique firearms, although some of the old guys are considered "antiques". They meet every Thursday at Camp Winnebago, Rockaway, NJ, all year round, and guests are always welcome. They are organized as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. All of the members are registered with the BSA, take CPR and AED training, and are vaccinated for COVID.

More than half of the Flintlocks have been awarded the prestigious Silver Beaver Award, which is the highest National Award for a volunteer in the Scouting Program. They usually provide approximately 5,000 hours of volunteer skilled labor every year, saving the Council close to \$250,000 of labor costs.

In the past, the Flintlocks have built cabins, picnic tables, painted the dining hall, built the archery range, built all the structures at the waterfront, financed, built and equipped the STEM Lab at Allamuchy Scout Reservation, financed and built an addition to the Wink Dousa Cabin, and repaired damage to camp structures. In addition to building structures and doing repairs and maintenance, they also volunteer at many Council programs throughout the year. One popular program for Cub Scouts for which the Flintlocks volunteer is called "For the Birds". The children learn about birds and build birdhouses and bird feeders.

The Facebook Page is "Flintlocks". Guests are always welcome. For more information contact Secretary Dr. Michael Hart at drmhart@yahoo.com.



(above) The Flintlocks BSA, Inc. members showing the signs representing the 12 points of the Scout Law. They tease one member for always being seen with a coffee cup in his hand, so they made him a sign reading "coffee". These signs will be posted at the Allamuchy Scout Reservation in Byram, NJ, located near Waterloo Village.

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RETIRED POLICEMEN AND FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION LOCAL 3

The Retired Policemen and Firemen's Association (NJRPFPA) Local 3, is comprised of members from of Union and Somerset counties. Monthly meetings are held at the Kenilworth VFW.

The NJRPFPA was established in 1987 to promote and develop a friendly spirit among its members, both retired and associate members. There are over 3,000 members of the association in various county Locals in NJ, as well as Local 22 in the State of Florida. These members are retirees from State, County and Local Firefighters, Police, Sheriff, Prosecutors, and Attorney General's Office to name a few. These members reside in NJ, NY, PA, FL, VA, SC and many other states.

If you live in Union County or Somerset County, please consider joining our Local 3 to keep abreast of major issues which may impact on your retirement benefits and issues that may be of value to you. Our yearly dues are \$10. For more information visit: njrpfpa.org/local3/

During our careers as police and firemen, we never ignored a call for help from the public, we were always there and always ready, and now, that we are retired, we ask that we be--- not forgotten. We have over 300 members here in Union and Somerset Counties and we keep that comradery, and spirit of friendship by supporting our retired members, their families, and the community when they need help.

A recent guest speaker at our monthly meeting was Special Agent in Charge of the NYC DEA office, Frank Tarentino. Agent Tarentino spoke to our membership along with officials from Kenilworth's Harding School. The topic of the presentation was Fentanyl Awareness and the dangers of this drug coming into our country.

Local 3 also presented a check to the Union County Police Chiefs Association. It will go towards the new construction of the "Fallen Officers Memorial" which is located in front the Police Academy in Scotch Plains. Scotch Plains Chief Ted Conley accepted the Check from Chief



(above) Retired Police Chief Kenneth Grady, President of the Retired Policemen and Firemen's Association Local 3 of Union County presented a check in the amount of \$1,000 to Scotch Plains Chief Ted Conley. The donation is to go towards the new construction of the "Fallen Officers Memorial" which is under construction in front of the John H. Stamler Police Academy in Scotch Plains.

Kenneth Grady (Ret) President of Local 3.

Local 3 also participated in the National Red Ribbon week with Harding School officials. Harding School Counselor Kristen Jeans

obtained the red ribbons which were handed out at the meeting. National Red Ribbon Week is in tribute to slain DEA Agent Enrique Camarena who was killed in 1985 in Mexico.



(above) Active and retired members of Local 3 participating in National Red Ribbon Week. National Red Ribbon Week is in tribute to slain DEA Agent Enrique Camarena who was killed in 1985 in Mexico.



(above) Members of the Union County Prosecutor's Office with retired Police Chief Kenneth Grady and Special Agent in Charge of the NYC DEA Office Frank Tarentino. Special Agent Tarentino addressed the members of Local 3 on the dangers of fentanyl. Members of Harding School were also invited. The meeting was in support of National Red Ribbon Week in tribute to slain DEA Agent Enrique Camarena. Red Ribbons were handed out to the membership.

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Michael Boll, Director New Jersey Veterans Network

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To accomplish this, our charity has joined forces with the NJ VFW. We work together on numerous outreach events that are dedicated to help veterans and their families. Also, we built relationships with the NJ National Guard, NJ American Legion, NJ SOS Stakeholders, Catholic Charities, NJ RWB, Backpacks For Life, Rebuilding Warriors, NJ Elks, Branchburg Rotary Club, and many other organizations. These partnerships are vital to help our veterans, and we are extremely lucky to have so many

dedicated organizations putting veterans first.

What makes the NJVN different is that we are able to provide veterans various services because of our strong network. Our Team is comprised of people from all over the state with different skillsets and this gives us an edge when it comes to helping veterans with their unique needs. Through the NJVN veterans have access to volunteers from all different professions, like lawyers, mechanics, service officers and physical therapists. Our volunteers do their very best to help assist veterans and their family members. We are the unit or detachment that provides the veteran a new purpose and empowers them to help others. We believe "Paying it Forward" is the best way to help veterans get in a better place and motivates them to live a better way of life.

In the last few years, our team has fed thousands of active-duty National Guardsmen

and disabled veterans living in shelters and nursing Homes. We have been able to donate nearly 30 refurbished and new vehicles to veterans in need. Also, we have been able to give thousands of veterans new suits, clothing and toiletries. But the most important thing our team does is, "SAVE LIVES". We are able to this because we love our veterans and provide them with in person human contact and stay with them throughout the process.

The American volunteer has always been there first for every crisis or disaster and our team is extremely fortunate to have the best group of men and women, who are willing to put their egos aside and focus on helping our veterans live the best life possible. The team is always looking for volunteers to help us with our mission. If you are interested in joining the team, please send me your name, email, and phone number via email NJVN1775@gmail.com. Help us save Vets!!



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 a veteran or family member that is in need of assistance, or 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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