

CRANFORD MONTHLY_{NJ}

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BOY SCOUTS HIKE THE MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD

Submitted by Peter McDevitt

Cranford's Troop 80 had their Spring camping trip from April 21st-23rd at Quail Ridge Scout Reservation in Manalapan, NJ. During this trip, the Scouts hiked Monmouth Battlefield State Park, the site of the 1778 American Revolution battle made famous by Molly Pitcher. They followed the 3-mile loop around the park to landmarks of the battle. The Scouts also worked on their Cooking Merit Badge. Scout Patrols created a menu for three meals, and shopped for their ingredients ahead of time. Then they worked together to prepare and cook their meals. The last meal of the trip was a chili cook-off, which was cooked by wood fire in a Dutch oven. Overall, a fun and successful trip!

Troop 80 meets from September-June at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, 11 Springfield Ave., on Mondays from 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. If you have interest in learning more about Scouting, please stop by!



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CRANFORD MONTHLY NJ

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Cranford's 102-year-old Memorial Day observance, originated by Cranford VFW Post 335, has taught generations of Cranford residents of all ages, the true meaning of this special day. The work of many goes into a program that honors Cranford' fallen military in a manner of which they are deserving.

Many residents, past and present, feel that the way our town honors its fallen heroes on Memorial Day is one of the top reasons why they love Cranford. If you are new to the Best Downtown in N.J., or if you have lived here for years, we encourage you to bring your family and a neighbor and "follow the parade to the ceremony".

The Cranford Memorial Day Parade starts at 9:00 a.m. in front of the Community Center at 220 Walnut Avenue. It meanders through town, ending at Memorial Park along the Crane's Ford section of the Rahway River, for which our town is named. By 10:00 a.m. the ceremony starts and it is a hometown experience that will leave you feeling emotional, but grateful that you live in a town that respects our military who thought that no price was too high to pay for living in freedom as we do here in Cranford.

We hope to see you on Memorial Day morning, May 29th, where we will dedicate the banners of four new Cranford Hometown Heroes, and tell their stories. This year we are thrilled to be hosting family members of each of our

honorees, some travelling from as far as California and Florida.

We urge you all, as the parade's last group passes you by, to pick up your chair and follow the parade to our beautiful Memorial Park. Enjoy a one-hour program of music and ceremony, put together by your fellow residents and support our Gold Star families, who have come home to Cranford for this very special occasion.



(above) Marine Corp veteran Braulio Lirenzo, 2022 Memorial Day Parade Grand Marshall

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LILY YOUNG RECEIVES NJDAR GOOD CITIZEN AWARD

Submitted by Mary Leonard, Cranes Ford DAR



(above) Lily Young, a senior at Cranford High School, was presented with the NJDAR Good Citizen Award and Scholarship.

The New Jersey Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NJDAR) recently announced their Good Citizen Award and Scholarship would be presented to Lily Young, a senior at Cranford High School. She received the award at the NJDAR 131st State Conference held at Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township. The high school senior selected must have the qualities of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism. The scholarship portion of the program consists of two parts. The student must describe how they have tried to manifest the qualities of a good citizen and secondly must write an essay on a topic chosen by the National Society. This year the topic was titled "Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It". The focus question was "How will the essential actions of a good citizen meet the challenges that American faces in this decade?" There were 16 NJDAR chapters participating in the Good Citizen award.

The Cranes Ford Chapter will award Lily

Young at the Cranford High School Awards night on June 1 at 7 p.m. The chapter has been sponsoring the Good Citizen Award since 1950. The National Society has been awarding the Good Citizen Scholarship for 89 years. The DAR, founded in 1890 and headquartered in Washington DC, is a non-profit, non-political volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children. Currently there are 185,000 members and 3,000 chapters nationwide. There are chapters in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and countries overseas. The Cranes Ford chapter was founded in 1944, New Jersey has 45 chapters. DAR membership is open to any woman 18 years or older who can prove lineal, bloodline descent from an ancestor who aided in achieving American Independence.

If you think you have a Patriot of the American Revolution in your family please contact DAR.org to get more information.





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OFFICER MICHAEL GAMBA RECEIVES SEALS VALOR AWARD

Cranford Police Department

On Friday, May 12th 2023, the New Jersey Office of Attorney General presented Officer Michael Gamba of the Cranford Police Department the Detective Joseph Seals Valor Award at an Excellence in Policing Awards ceremony hosted in Trenton, New Jersey.

Nearly a year earlier on the evening of May 28, 2022, Cranford Patrol Units responded to the senior housing complex located at 40 Meeker Avenue for a reported Domestic Violence incident. The incident involved an elderly woman who stated that her son had physically assaulted her and during the course of the assault, pointed a firearm in her direction. The mother further stated that her son may be having suicidal thoughts. Sgt. Steven D'Ambola, Officer Michael Gamba, and Officer Nicholas Cook proceeded to the residence to make contact with the suspect and place him under arrest.

As each of the officers arrived on scene, it was determined that the suspect had already left the residence and was walking in the neighborhood. Due to the beautiful Spring night, there were many pedestrians in the area which made the situation more complicated. Officer Michael Gamba spotted the individual walking down Meeker Avenue toward the apartment complex. Utilizing a ballistic shield, the officers tactically approached the suspect, placing themselves in the line of fire should the suspect be armed. As Sgt. D'Ambola began the approach, the suspect began to back away ignoring the verbal commands of the officers.

Fearing that the individual may still indeed be armed, Officer Michael Gamba exited his position of cover and moved quickly toward the suspect. As Off. Gamba approached, the suspect reached into his waistband and began to raise a

black semi-automatic firearm. Officer Gamba immediately recognized the firearm, and without hesitation placed himself in direct danger in what was most certainly a Deadly Force encounter. Off. Gamba grabbed hold of the firearm by placing his hand on the slide and wrestled the firearm from the suspect's hand. Off. Cook and Sgt. D'Ambola immediately tackled the suspect to the ground and placed him under arrest. "The heroic actions by all three officers almost certainly prevented injuries not only to themselves, but also the innocent pedestrians in the area," Chief Ryan J. Greco said

Once the scene became stabilized, and the suspect was in custody, it was determined that the firearm was a loaded 9mm Polymer80 Inc. "Ghost Gun." The significance of this incident has brought much attention to the topic of Ghost Guns. This gun was ordered in numerous pieces

via the internet as the suspect, a known drug-user with psychiatric issues, would never have been legally able to own a firearm.

For his efforts, Officer Michael Gamba was awarded with the Detective Joseph Seals Valor Award by Attorney General Matthew Platkin. According to the Attorney General's Office, the "Detective Joseph Seals Valor Award honors a police officer who demonstrated an act of extraordinary bravery or heroism in the line of duty. The award honors Detective Joseph Seals, a 13-year veteran of the Jersey City Police Department, who lost his life in the line of duty in December 2019. Detective Seals' actions in December 2019 likely saved the lives of many others."

Present for the ceremony on behalf of the Cranford Police Department were Chief Ryan J. Greco and Captain Matthew R. Nazzaro.



(above, l-r) Attorney General Matthew Platkin, Officer Michael Gamba, and Cranford Police Chief Ryan J. Greco.

Courtesy photo



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SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ JUNE SHOW

The Salem Roadhouse Café presents the Stephen Fuller Quintet, Saturday, June 10, 2023. The doors open at 7:15 p.m., the show starts at 8 p.m. Admission is \$20 and includes show, snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and dessert. The venue is located in the basement of Townley Presbyterian Church, 829 Salem Rd, Union, NJ. The Roadhouse operates as a non-profit that raises funds for several carefully chosen local charities.

Stephen Fuller's deep rich voice and soulful renditions have long made him a favorite with sophisticated audiences around the world, performing in Israel, Jamaica, Costa Rica and The US Virgin Islands. In addition to his overseas engagements, Fuller has also performed in renowned New York City and New Jersey venues and has opened for both Stevie Wonder and Bill Withers while attending Colgate University.

Stephen will perform at the Roadhouse with his quintet. Last year he did a total calypso show which got the audience totally involved and thrilled. Stephen has always been top notch entertainment. This show he's working on some special treats for us.

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, 829 Salem Rd, Union, NJ. 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.

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. Many thousands of dollars have been raised for these deserving charities.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S CLUB ANNUAL SCHOLAR TEA

The College Women's Club of Cranford held their Annual Scholar Tea last month. The club is so grateful to all of their generous sponsors. The Cake Artist for the scrumptious and traditional tea fare made exclusively for this event. Special thanks to the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford. The CWCC members were also thrilled to have Dr. Louise Chernosky, the choral director for the Celebrations Singers and Cranford resident do a lovely musical interlude for the event this year.

Over 100 ladies enjoyed the afternoon together. This is the club's largest fundraising event of the year. All the proceeds go to scholarships to support Cranford residents who are seniors at any high school and preparing for college. How lucky we are to have such a supportive and giving community! Thanks to all our members and volunteers we could not do it without you! Please visit our website for membership and club information.

collegewomensclubcranford.com. All general meetings with programs are free and open to the public. Thank you to all for your continued support and generous donations.



(above) The College Women's Club of Cranford members Kathy Douglass, Arline McCloskey and Lynn Stark decked out in their fancy Tea hats at the Annual Scholar Tea Fundraiser.

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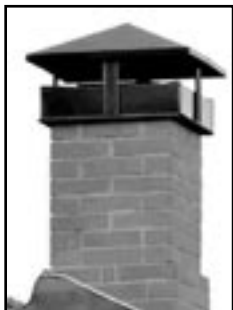
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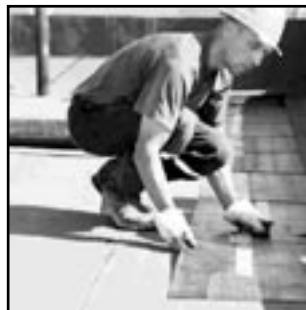
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Imagine trained a wonderful new group of volunteer facilitators recently. The group attended a training from April 1-3 from 9 .m.- 5 p.m. each day.
If you're a high school age youth interested in training to join our team of youth facilitators that co-facilitate Imagine's children's groups, please visit our website at imagine-nj.org where you'll find a link to register for our training on

September 10th.
Imagine has a current team of 81 incredible volunteers facilitating 36 groups on 5 Nights of Support. We're so grateful for this wonderful team of facilitators who create safe spaces where Imagine's participants can share their stories and receive support following a loss. This amazing community of volunteers is helping Imagine ensure that no one grieves alone.

Save the Date
The Garden Club of Cranford
A Peek Beyond the Garden Gate
A Garden Tour
June 10, 2023
10 am - 3 pm
(Rain or Shine)

Proceeds from the tour will benefit
The Garden Club of Cranford, community based activities
and the annual Frances Wismer Scholarship.

For additional information email:
gardenclubofcranford@gmail.com



(above) Imagine's newest group of facilitators Mike D., Morganville; Reenie H., Westfield; Marissa C., Cranford; Nicole H., Maplewood; Maria S., Somerset; Ron F., Summit.

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CRANFORD POLICE PARTICIPATE IN POLICE UNITY TOUR

Team Cranford participated in a 4-day, 320-mile bicycle ride from Northern NJ to Washington DC to remember fallen police officers. The Police Unity Tour was formed in 1997 and its mission is to raise public awareness about law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty.

Cranford Police Cycling Team consisted of

Captain Patterson, Retired Sgt. Farbanec, Det. LoForte, and SAIC Riera. Auxiliary Sgt. John Guempel was noted for being an integral part of the support team.

The officers rode with hundreds of law enforcement officers to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. They arrived in Washington D.C. on Friday,

May 12, after completing the last leg of the ride from Annapolis, MD, alongside members of the Roselle Park, Summit, Kenilworth, Westfield, Springfield police departments, Union County Sheriff's Office, and Federal partners in the USSS.

For additional information about the Police Unity Tour, please visit policeunitytour.com.



(above) Pictured here are riders from Team Cranford Police Department, Team Roselle Park Police, Team Springfield Police Department, Team Summit Police Department, and Team Westfield Police Department.

Courtesy photo

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PAINT IN THE PARK – JUNE 3

Hanson Park Conservancy and The Jan Lilien Educational Fund present a “Paint in the Park” event at Hanson Park, 38 Springfield Avenue, Cranford on Saturday, June 3, 2023.

Fire Me Up! Studio, will provide canvases with a pre-sketched image, paint, and other supplies, as well as painting instruction. This is a Plein Air event (plein-air painting, is the act of painting outdoors) and will focus on the beautiful surroundings at Hanson Park.

No previous experience necessary. The project

will consist of two, back-to-back classes – one for up to 30 children and one for up to 30 adults. The canvases will be pre-sketched with imagery that is age appropriate an “easier” image for children, and a more “advanced” image for adults.

Children’s guided painting - 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Adult’s painting session - 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Registration is free but must be completed online at hansonparkconservancy.com. Space is limited to the first 30 registrants for each session.

HELP TO NAVIGATE LIFE AS A SINGLE PERSON

SEASONS welcomes anyone who has lost a significant other to participate in our activities and to meet people who are in a similar situation.

SEASONS is a non-denominational support group for individuals who have experienced the loss of a partner, including divorced, separated, or widowed individuals, and for those never married. It is designed to provide assistance in the process of navigating life as a single person through group discussions, guest speakers, and social activities. Our meetings take place monthly on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at the First

Presbyterian Church, 11 Springfield Ave., in Cranford. Please enter through the middle door on Springfield Ave., or call 908-418-8602.

For more information, contact Bob Laudati 908-322-7762, rdlaudati@aol.com.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE:

Thursday, June 08, 7:00 p.m.: we welcome Dr. Marvin Garfinkle, Ph.D, Psychotherapist, who will discuss Getting Yourself to Move Ahead.

Thursday, June 22, 5:00 p.m.: join us for our end-of-season dinner event at the Westfield Diner, 309 E. North Ave. in Westfield.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOK SALES

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library is hosting its annual Used Children’s Book Sale. This sale is available only to Cranford Public Library cardholders and teachers. The sale will be held in the Cranford Public Library’s Friendly Book Cellar from Thursday, June 8 through Saturday, June 10, 2023. Hours are as follows: Thurs, June 8th, 3:00 pm - 8:00 pm; Fri, June 9th, 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm; Saturday, June 10th, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. It will feature its largest inventory yet, including children, young adult, teacher-specific, and parenting books. Registration is required and can be done so at cranfordlibrary.org/friends.php. Cash or checks only.

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library will also be hosting an all-inclusive used Book Sale, July 13 – 15. All are welcome! Registration is required and will be open after June 12 at cranfordlibrary.org/friends.php. Cash or checks

only.

Proceeds of sales benefit library programming and events for all ages throughout the year. These sales are not possible without your help. Book donations of gently used books for both children and adults are appreciated and welcomed any time during library hours. Library staff at the front desk can help direct you.



(above) Registration is required.



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MEET PFC DANIEL A. HILDEBRANDT, ONE OF CRANFORD'S HOMETOWN HEROES

By Don Sweeney, Vic Bary and Janet Ashnault, Researched by Stu Rosenthal and Vic Bary

Memorial Day 2023 marks the sixth year in a row in which we will reintroduce to Cranford's residents another set of their Hometown Heroes. I find myself thinking back to those who inspired us to embark upon this mission. First there was the late Bob Greco, who was a WWII veteran and member of Cranford VFW Post 335. On Memorial Day, Bob would read the names of the 57 Cranford men who perished in four short years in WWII, most of whom were his classmates at Cranford High School. At the time, Bob was one of the few who remained in Cranford who could still remember, not only the faces of these men, but how they each contributed to victory in Europe and the Pacific. It was then that we realized that, slowly and silently, the images of these heroic men were fading and they were starting to become "just names". Also, there was Mike Sapara, a Vietnam veteran who carries a deep devotion to the memory of his classmates from Cranford. Mike wore metal tribute bracelets for Ray Ashnault, Joe Minnock and Danny Hildebrandt who all went to Vietnam before Mike did, but, unlike Mike, they did not come home. When Mike shared with us his thoughts about the Vietnam War and the friends that he lost, this was the spark that ignited the writing of the very first Cranford 86 story (rennmedia.com/cranford86/the-cranford86-project). The U.S. government lists the "address of record" as Cranford for both Ray Ashnault and Joe Minnock. Therefore, when they died, they became a part of Cranford's history and were embraced as two of Cranford's 86. Their stories were among the first written by the Cranford 86 project and their street banners fly proudly throughout town. We know their names and we can see their faces. Danny Hildebrandt spent the majority of his life here in Cranford, but at the age of fifteen he moved with his family ten miles away to Iselin, New Jersey. Even though young Danny lived out of town, he was able to keep the close ties that he had with many of his Cranford friends. The memory of Danny Hildebrandt, as a son of Cranford, still lives in the heart of Mike Sapara and so many from Cranford who knew him. Although Danny is one of those who "gave all" in Vietnam, because of his Iselin address, he is not specifically included in Cranford's yearly Memorial Day observance. You will not see his name inscribed on the brass plaques at our Memorial Park in Cranford.

"WHAT ABOUT DANNY HILDEBRANDT?"

Danny Hildebrandt was born on February 21, 1948, to Margaret and Edward Hildebrandt. He lived with his parents and siblings, Edward Jr., Patty and Keith on Roger Norton Place in the Indian Village section of Cranford, ironically on a street named in honor of a WWII Cranford 86 Hometown Hero. Edward Sr. worked as an independent plumber and was later employed by Reynold's Plumbing in town. The Hildebrandt's life in Cranford was interrupted in the late 50's when they sold their home in town and made an abrupt relocation to California for an

employment opportunity. The California experiment didn't pan out and the Hildebrandts found themselves back in Cranford again, this time at a smaller rental home on Woodlawn Avenue. They lived here for 3 years, until their move to Iselin in 1964.

Faithfully, every few months, Mike Sapara checks in with us to let us know how much our stories mean to him and to offer his well wishes to our team. Mike never ends a call without asking if our efforts to tell Danny Hildebrandt's story had at all progressed. I always provide him with the same answer, sometimes in exasperation, and explain how the address of record is what defines the boundaries of our project and there wasn't anything that could be done to change that. Mike was never deterred by my repeated explanation and he continued to close every one of his phone calls with that same question.

As our team continues to roll out our servicemen's stories, we receive feedback, either in person or from our Facebook followers. Many times, our readers ask, "What about Danny Hildebrandt?" A few years ago, while shopping in Pathmark, my wife Joanne's friend, Carol Korner Riley, approached me. Carol said, "Don, I have been reading your stories about the Hometown Heroes, did you know about Danny Hildebrandt?" I went into my usual response, explaining about Danny's address of record being in Iselin. Carol told me that she and Danny had been a couple and they were in love as two young people could have ever been. She said that they had plans to marry when he returned from Vietnam. The emotion that I heard in her voice was evident, and it caught me as well. Despite the address guidelines, I promised Carol that I would someday find a way to have Danny's story told. Last year I heard that our friend Carol was having some serious health issues, I started thinking that if we were ever going to do Danny's story, that we should do it now. With a month to go before Memorial Day, we already had the stories of three WWII infantrymen completed. Supported by Carol Riley's willingness to share her memories, we decided that we had a small window of opportunity in which to research the details of Danny Hildebrandt's life and tell the story that led to him serving our country in Vietnam in 1968.

CRANFORD 86 RESEARCHERS IN ACTION

In a process that has now become like second nature to them, Cranford 86 researchers Stu Rosenthal and Vic Bary, swung into action. Stu immediately found several mentions in the Cranford Chronicle archives which gave us a glimpse into Danny's early days. The "School News" column reported on Danny's elementary school activities, drawing birds with his second grade class at Walnut Avenue School, his appointment to class president for the month and his entry in the Safety Poster contest which won a prize. The newspaper also referenced Danny's membership in Cub Scout Pack 82 at the Community Methodist Church. Danny's



(above) In December 1967, after completing an accelerated training program, Danny enjoyed time with family and friends back in New Jersey. This is the only picture that was supplied to us and we were told it was taken in the family living room on the day Danny left.

athleticism began to become evident as we found his name mentioned in a dozen baseball-related articles. After little league in Cranford, Danny advanced to the highly competitive Union County Baseball League where the write-ups were focused on his crucial contributions in big games. His contemporary on the ballfield was Cranford 86 member Ray Ashnault. In some instances, he and Ray were on opposing teams but on the Cranford All-Star team that played other towns, they were teammates. During Danny's junior and senior years at JFK High School in Iselin, the Woodbridge local paper reported on his continued high level of performance in baseball.

Never ceasing to amaze me with his investigative skills, Stu Rosenthal promptly sent me a phone number which he believed was that of Danny's younger brother Keith, age sixty-five, living in Florida. The voice mail message indeed indicated that the number belonged to a "Keith". I left my message, explaining our project and asking for a call back. Four days passed and I was starting to think that perhaps I had the wrong Keith. Or, maybe I did reach Keith Hildebrandt

(continued on page 16)

PFC DANIEL A. HILDEBRANDT (continued from page 15)

who was reluctant to reopen the book on the circumstances surrounding his brother. This is always a possibility in these encounters that we make, involving a life which has ended so sadly. Finally, on day five my phone rang, indicating a call from Florida. It was Keith Hildebrandt and we set a time for an interview that night. Keith explained that he was just seven years old when his family left Cranford, and nine when he lost his brother. We spoke for nearly an hour as he shared how devastated he was, to lose his older brother whom he idolized. During our talk, I experienced déjà vu, as this was the third time that I had interviewed the younger brother of one of Cranford's Vietnam War heroes. John Ashnault and Todd Elichko, younger brothers of Ray Ashnault and Dean Elichko had shared with me similar poignant and precious memories from so many years ago. John, Todd and I are similar in age, and we have become good friends since the Cranford 86 mission brought us together. Keith explained that his brother was a natural born athlete which confirmed what we had read in the local newspapers. Danny was a mentor to his younger brother and taught him everything about sports. Keith said that he wanted to do everything just like his big brother, telling us that Danny excelled in football and track as well. Remembering the emotional interviews which I have conducted in the past, I listened more than I talked and learned about this special relationship between a ten year old and his twenty year old brother. The emotion was deep, and the memories had not faded a bit. Keith told us that he had fond memories of Carol Korner and was happy to hear of her contribution to his brother's story. Keith's mom would send him along on many "dates" with Danny and Carol, going sledding or ice skating, and Carol always made him feel welcome. Later, even after Danny's death, Carol was their family's hairdresser. Keith quickly set up a phone meeting with Carol, eager to reconnect after so many years. Keith's fond memories of his brother summarized Danny Hildebrandt as a kind, funny person and a generally nice guy. In every interview that I conducted throughout the week, the stories were different, but those descriptions, "kind, funny and a nice guy" were repeated time and time again. In addition, whether I spoke to men or women about Danny, there were always comments about his incredible good looks.

I invited Carol to our home to talk with Joanne and me about the wonderful days when she and Danny Hildebrandt were a couple. They first met in the high school nurse's office. Carol was just fifteen and Danny, who was fourteen, was sitting there with his leg in a cast, the result of an ice skating injury. They had a chance to chat casually and I imagine that the conversation was full of humor, something that is typical of Carol. As the school year progressed they started seeing each other, going to the movies and such, but their first kiss was a long time coming. One night, in a carful of kids, driven by their friend John O'Donnell, they were being dropped off at their respective homes, one by one, in order of

convenience. As Danny worked his way from the back seat, he had to cross over Carol. Thinking that it was about time that they shared a kiss, Carol grabbed him and planted a big one on him. He sat back down and told John, "Drop me off with Carol, I'll walk home". From then on, they were going "steady". The story that touched me the most was the one where she was in front of the Cranford Hotel waiting for Danny. She watched him approach in his stylish, well-fitting attire, typical of the 1960's, skintight, green, beltless "continental pants", with a white collared button down shirt and his short sleeves rolled up high. She remembered saying to herself as he approached, "I can't believe that's mine". As Danny was about to start his junior year in high school, it was a sad day when he told her that their family was going to leave Cranford again, this time to buy a home in Iselin. Not to allow the miles between them to keep them apart, Carol remembers walking to Iselin regularly. The trip by foot would take a solid two hours and she walked it many times to watch Danny play baseball at Iselin's Merrill Park. Danny would make the same trip to see her, by bicycle, until they reached driving age. Graduating high school one year ahead of Danny, Carol became a hairdresser at a beauty salon in Cranford. Danny worked at ShopRite in Avenel during high school and after graduation, took a job at Revlon, where his uncle was employed.

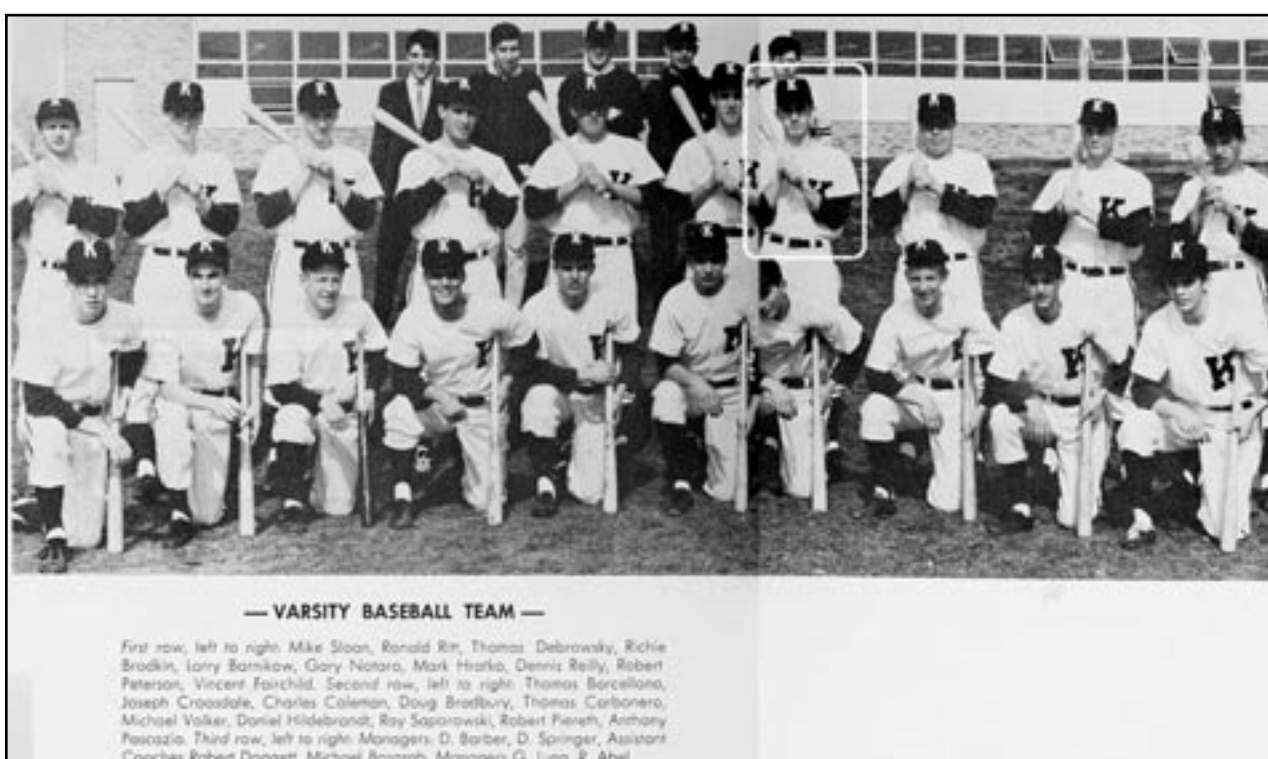
1967 – THE DRAFT ESCALATES

The Vietnam War served as a backdrop to their lives during these times, and Walter Cronkite's nightly news broadcasts kept the American population up-to-date on the fighting. United States involvement was escalating rapidly and the war that was at first predicted to be a short encounter for our armed forces, was quickly becoming a war that some thought was unwinnable. The sensitive political climate surrounding the civil rights movement, intertwined with anti-war protests made this

period in our country's history very complex. By 1967, the number of Americans in harm's way in Vietnam was reaching 400,000, and President Johnson was pledging to send more and more American boys to the battlefield each month. Danny soon received a letter from the draft board calling him to service, bringing him and his family squarely into the center of these wild times. Carol would tell us of a verbal deal that was cut with Danny's recruiter. If Danny was to "up his draft" he would be able to select his war time destination. Even though Danny agreed to the terms and entered service before his original date, his destination was not as he had selected, as the extreme demand for soldiers needed in Vietnam would not allow it. Mike Sapara explained to us that recruiters were salesmen of sorts and sometimes, to close a deal, they would offer special situations that they could not guarantee. From a remembrance left on the Vietnam veteran tribute site called The Virtual Wall, we were able to connect with Danny's JFK High School classmate Matt Winkler. Matt told us about meeting Danny at Fort Knox in Kentucky where they spent eight weeks together. Their casual friendship was renewed and developed further there, even discovering that they held consecutive draft registration numbers. For their Advanced Individual Training, Matt stayed at Fort Knox for further education in radio school, while Danny attended Advanced Infantry Training at another base for his very dangerous Light Weapons Infantry MOS (11B10). Matt figured that with Danny's strength and athletic ability, the Army determined that he'd be most valuable to them as an infantry soldier. Luckily, Matt was sent to Germany for the rest of his service.

Carol commented on how fast everything happened. "Danny reported for duty to Newark in August, and went immediately to Fort Dix, where he was sent by plane for basic training. He

(continued on page 17)



(above) The 1966 team photo of Danny's varsity baseball team at JFK High School in Iselin. Danny played baseball in both his junior and senior years.

PFC DANIEL A. HILDEBRANDT (continued from page 16)

never returned until shortly before he shipped out to Vietnam in January". She wondered how such a kind, funny and friendly person could be transformed into a hardened soldier in such a short amount of time. Seeing Danny before he left, made her doubt that he had been changed at all.

THE AMERICAL DIVISION IN THE QUANG NGAI PROVINCE

To help us write Danny's story, we connected with many friends and family members, but none were able to provide us with any documents or photos from family archives. The 56 years that had passed left each of our contacts without a single personal artifact for a variety of reasons. We know that PFC Daniel Hildebrandt became a member of the infantry unit known as the Americal Division. Americal is a contraction of the name "American, New Caledonian Division" which references the South Pacific island on which the division originated in WWII. Americal was reactivated in September of 1967, to help combat the guerilla style warfare that the Viet Cong developed in their decades-long battle, defending their homeland against numerous occupiers. The Viet Cong used expertly designed land mines and booby traps and had the ability to create underground shelters with elaborate tunneling. The U.S. military's advanced air and ground machinery, which normally gave them modern war superiority, was rendered largely ineffective due to the covert tactics of the Viet Cong. We knew Danny served in Company A (175 soldiers), 3rd Battalion (700 soldiers), 1st Regiment (1,500 soldiers), 11th Brigade (4,500 soldiers) of the Americal Division (15,000 soldiers at full strength). He joined his unit on January 13, 1968, and was one of 3,700 regular replacements to join the Americal Division between January 1 and April 30, 1968. He met his end while serving in the infantry, possibly from an explosive device, like a land mine or "booby

trap". Based on the date of his arrival and what happened in history shortly after, we know that our Hometown Hero must have endured baptism by fire. The largest military offensive by the North Vietnam Army (NVA) and the Viet Cong guerillas, began on January 31st. Named for a sacred holiday, the Lunar New Year, TET, the TET Offensive commenced during the negotiated yearly cease fire, adding to the surprise nature of its beginning. With the war stuck in a stalemate for some time, the communists' expectation was that all Vietnamese people would rise up to support their offensive and turn the war around. The North Vietnamese simultaneously attacked over 100 South Vietnam locations making January 31st the deadliest day of the entire war.

Our military expert Vic Bary, a decorated Vietnam veteran himself from the same era, was extremely successful with his outreach to the Americal Division Veterans Association. One of the association's veterans, Gary Johnson, was a member of Company A, Hildebrandt's company of 175 men. He remembered the action vividly that took Danny's life. These details that we have uncovered will be new information to every friend and family member of the Hildebrandts. Danny's unit was part of "Task Force Barker", which was named after the lieutenant colonel in its command. Their mission was called Operation Muscatine, a search and destroy mission to find elements of the Viet Cong 48th Local Force Battalion, a guerilla unit believed to be in the area. Hildebrandt's unit moved down from an elevated area known as Buddha Mountain through a series of small groups of jungle settlements known as hamlets. The company had been through the area before with no incidents. On February 13, 1968, at 5:25 p.m., Company A was first engaged by automatic weapons and small arms fire from a hamlet. This was Danny Hildebrandt's first combat engagement. Gary Johnson's vivid account created an amazing

visual picture. Company A was "on line", crossing an open field while aircraft bombed the hamlet ahead. Company B, 4th Battalion was set up on Company A's right flank as a blocking force. As Hildebrandt's Company A moved to within 50 meters of the hamlet, they became pinned down by heavy machine gun fire, even as the hamlet was being bombed. The gunfire was heavy and sustained and pinned down one platoon (40 men) of Company A. The Viet Cong started systematically "walking" mortar fire onto Company A's location. Company A would retreat and later reattack only to retreat again. The

(continued on page 18)



(above) The inscription on Danny's headstone reads "PFC Daniel A. Hildebrandt age 19 years, a brave young soldier who gave his life in Vietnam, February 13, 1968. His name is inscribed for all generations to read and remember, he died with honor on the field of battle so that we may live in freedom and peace". Danny's grave located at the entrance of Rose Hill Cemetery on U.S. Route 1 in Linden. The photo on the stone was the best picture of him that we had and was used on his Hometown Hero Banner.



(above) We gain some fun facts for our hero profiles from their high school yearbook portrait pages. Here we see Danny's nickname "Hilde" and his hopes of a possible professional baseball career. We also enjoy seeing the hairstyles of the era displayed by classmates Catherine and Mary Ann. Carol Korner's 1965 Cranford High School yearbook entry, of course mentions Danny. From her smart 1960's style shown here, it is evident that she chose the right career path as a hairdresser. We are happy to report that Carol is healthy and doing well.

PFC DANIEL A. HILDEBRANDT (continued from page 17)

bombing of the hamlet was replaced by helicopter gunships firing machine guns and rockets into the hamlet. At this point Hildebrandt's unit would attempt its third attack. Gary Johnson would describe "bullets were like the wind coming from the enemy, the gunships and the blocking forces". On this attack, Gary Johnson was wounded while trying to clear out a bunker outside the hamlet. Despite the heavy assault of the helicopter gunships which pounded the hamlet until 6:30PM, the enemy didn't break off until 7:18PM, nearly two hours after the engagement began. Overnight, "Spooky" gunships worked over the hamlet with their 50 rounds per second Gatling guns. In the morning there was no sign of the Viet Cong, they were gone. When losses were assessed, the two companies sustained one American killed (KIA), 9 wounded (WIA), one missing in action (MIA). Sadly, the American KIA was our own Danny Hildebrandt, just 8 days before his 20th birthday and just one month after his arrival in country in Vietnam. Company A had gone into the engagement with 120 men, down from an authorized strength of 180. Vic Bary stated that it was not uncommon for such a short head count during the Vietnam War. When Gary Johnson returned to Company A after treatment for his wounds, he found it to number only 64, suggesting there were further punishing engagements after February 13.

BAD NEWS FROM VIETNAM

Back in New Jersey, the Hildebrandts were informed that Danny was missing in action, and everyone awaited better news from the Army as several days passed. Carol was at work at the beauty salon when her mother unexpectedly arrived, wearing a very telling expression of sadness. "I came to tell you about Danny", her mother said, "It's the worst". Carol remembers breaking down and her mom took her home, where she was embraced by her dad. Her father tried to console her saying that he couldn't hurt any more if Danny were his own son. Carol took some time away from her job to recuperate from her loss. Typical of the era's public disrespect to the Vietnam veterans and their families, when her boss from the salon visited her home, he did not express his condolences, but rather collected the salon keys and told Carol that she did not need to return to work. Unbelievably, she was fired.

THE TET OFFENSIVE AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

The TET Offensive would continue until March 28th, 1968, and although the body count comparisons and traditional battle statistics would have declared the Americans the victors, many do not consider there to be any winner at all in the two month long offensive. In fact, the events which occurred in this time period created a turning point in the direction of the war. The news coverage of the TET Offensive and vivid accounts of the fierce fighting that the NVA and Viet Cong were capable of, changed public feeling about the war in Vietnam and from that point the U.S. involvement there would start to deescalate. The narrative that had been told from the White House and American media through

the past year, that we were winning this war, began to be challenged and was suspected to be false by many outspoken U.S. citizens.

HONORING A HERO

Danny's body was returned to a Linden funeral home in a sealed casket. His funeral was conducted with full military honors concluding with his burial at Rosehill Cemetery. In the personal belongings returned to the Hildebrandt family were two charred photographs of Carol, which were given to her. Keith Hildebrandt is the only remaining member left of his family and lives in Safety Harbor, Florida, outside Clearwater. He has promised to be with us on Memorial Day at the post-parade ceremony where his brother will be honored. PFC Daniel A. Hildebrandt's banner will fly permanently next to the granite tablets of Cranford's Memorial Park, the first time his name has been displayed



(above) On The Virtual Wall website, every man and woman killed in Vietnam has a page that looks like this. The blue rifle badge is a Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB), it was highly prized by infantrymen. Danny was also awarded the medals shown, Purple Heart, National Defense Service, Vietnam Service and Republic of Vietnam Campaign. Also shown are the patches that Danny wore on his arms. The four stars represent the Southern Cross constellation of the Americal Division, and the 11th Brigade patches on the right.

in Cranford since his passing in 1968. Danny Hildebrandt answered his country's call when asked and shortly after that, he lost his life while serving. Although not a member of our Cranford 86, he really deserves a place as one of Cranford's own.

HELP US GET TO NUMBER 86

With 47 stories left to write, we urge anyone who has information on any of our Hometown Heroes whose names are listed on the tablets at Memorial Park, to please come forward. The information and photographs that we receive from family and friends is what makes our stories come alive. We print our collection of pictures and stories each year and make it available for purchase after the Memorial Day ceremony. One volume contains all 40 tribute stories and the other will have just the four stories of this year's honorees to add to your collection. They make great coffee table books for patriotic Cranford residents or Mother's and Father's Day presents for Cranford parents. Contact us at info@cranford86.org or call me at (908) 447-6511

A FINAL THOUGHT

An interesting anecdote from Carol's interview helped to re-enforce the fact that Danny Hildebrandt will always be one of Cranford's Hometown Heroes. Carol feels that Danny's heart never left Cranford. She believes that if he had returned from Vietnam, they would have stayed in town. Danny had even picked out his dream home on Lincoln Park East. Carol remembers driving by it after his death and seeing that the home was for sale. Talking to him as she does occasionally, she looked up and said, "Hey Danny, your house is for sale."

Our thanks to Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA) members Gary Johnson, Leslie Keith, Gary Nolan and Michael McQueen who enabled us to reconstruct the details of Hildebrandt's final mission. Thank you to Michael Sapara for his determination, encouraging us to tell the story of his Sherman School classmate and for sponsoring the banner of PFC Daniel A. Hildebrandt.

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CRANFORD ARTIST WINS NON-PRO BEST IN SHOW

Toru Ishiyama, a member of the Cranford Senior Art Class, was awarded non-pro Best in Show in the Union County Senior Art Show for his entry entitled “Chrysler Building.” The large mixed-media piece on plywood uses word-burning and watercolor to achieve a highly-detailed and colorful cityscape.

Three other members of this class, a program of the Cranford Community Center, also won awards.

Jeff Parsons earned First Place in non-pro watercolor for his piece “Lunch Break - Chrysemys Picta.” Craig Manders won Second Place in the non-pro drawing category for “The Road” and teacher Deb Hargiss got Second Place in professional drawing for “Uneasy Lie the Heads.”

For information about the Senior Art Class and other classes offered by the Cranford Community Center, call (908) 709-7283.

Presented annually by the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, this exhibition will take place throughout the month of May at the Scotch Plains campus of Union County College. Open to the public on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and until 8 p.m. on Tuesdays, the event is located at 1776 Raritan Road in the third building on the right.



(above) Toru Ishiyama was awarded non-pro Best in Show in the Union County Senior Art Show for his entry entitled “Chrysler Building.”

Courtesy photo



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MAPLEWOOD

Mondays - 2 pm to 7 pm

METUCHEN

Saturdays - 9 am to 2 pm

MONTGOMERY

Saturdays - 9 am to 1 pm

MORRISTOWN

Sundays - 8:30 am to 2 pm

RIVERDALE

Tuesdays - 2:30 pm to 7 pm

ROSELLE PARK

Wednesdays - 1 pm to 6 pm

SOUTH ORANGE

Wednesdays - 2 pm to 7 pm

SPRINGFIELD

Mondays - 11 am to 6 pm



The New Jersey Council of Farmers and Communities (NJCF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and growing the network of community farmers' markets and farmers throughout northern and central New Jersey.

23RD ANNUAL FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY

Church of the Assumption, Roselle Park, NJ - June 8-11, 2023

The Church of the Assumption's annual St. Anthony Italian Feast returns for its 23rd year! The Feast will feature rides, games, live entertainment, homemade cooking, food vendors, a beer and wine garden, nightly 50/50s and a Super 50/50 drawn Sunday Night at 9 p.m. The Feast, located on the Church grounds at 113 Coolidge Place, Roselle Park, NJ, begins on Thursday, June 8 and runs through Sunday, June 11. Feast hours: Thursday & Friday 6-10 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 5-10 p.m.

As of press time, the following entertainment has been booked:

THURSDAY, JUNE 8:

6 p.m. - Fusion Dance Centre (Roselle Park)

7:30 p.m. - Planet Dance (Roselle Park)

8 p.m. - Valencia School of Music (Westfield)

FRIDAY, JUNE 9:

6 p.m. - Roselle Park High School Band

7:30 - 10 p.m. Band: Diamonds in Jupiter.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10:

5 p.m. - Susie Karlik's Dance Sensation (Union);

6 p.m. - Sabre Guild (Star Wars Costuming Group)

7:30 - 10 p.m. Band: 2/5ths Crazy

Sunday, June 11:

3 p.m. - Mass followed by a procession through the streets with the statue of St. Anthony;

5 - 6 p.m. - Traditional Italian music (DJ)

7:30 p.m. - Maplewood Glee Club.

Skip the line at the ticket booth and save up to 50% on the price of ride tickets by purchasing them prior to the Feast! Pay-One-Price Unlimited Ride wristbands, available at the Feast for \$30, are valid for Thursday, June 8. Visit the Church of the Assumption website at assumptionrp.com for more information and to buy discounted ride tickets.

23rd Annual Feast of St. Anthony

Feast of St. Anthony

Church of the Assumption • 113 Coolidge Place • Roselle Park, NJ



Church of the Assumption
2023

Thursday, June 8
6:00pm-10:00pm

Friday, June 9
6:00pm-10:00pm

Saturday, June 10
5:00pm-10:00pm

Sunday, June 11
5:00pm-10:00pm

\$30 Pay-One-Price Ride Wristband Night on Thursday, June 8

Mass and St. Anthony's Procession 3:00pm Sunday, June 11

50/50s Rides
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Valencia School of Music
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Diamonds in Jupiter
Friday June 9
7:30pm-10:00pm



2/5ths Crazy
Saturday June 10
7:30pm-10:00pm

A special thank you to the Borough of Roselle Park!
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RELIEF FROM CHRONIC KNEE PAIN

FDA Approved Treatment to Avoid Surgery

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Just like tens of millions of other Americans, you were looking for relief from your chronic knee pain. You thought Viscosupplementation injections might be the answer, but the results were disappointing and painful. Don't assume the treatment wasn't right. That could very well be like blaming the arrow for its path to the target when the problem might be the archer. If you didn't get the pain relief you were hoping for, chances are your injection treatment was off target. Unlike blind injections or even ultrasound targeted treatments found elsewhere, **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** uses diagnostic fluoroscopy to make sure the area that needs treated is the exact area where the injection goes. This is the most advanced method of delivering this pain relieving treatment with 95% accuracy to give you the results you're looking for. The use of Fluoroscopy guided injections sets **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** apart. The end result is you living pain free from your chronic knee pain. You can avoid the lengthy and painful road of knee replacement surgery. You can avoid the endless trial and error assortment of potentially addictive prescription medications. This treatment, using fluoroscopy guided injections has seen a success rate of above 85% in those suffering from knee pain related to osteoarthritis, and that includes people with bone on bone involvement. You've suffered from chronic knee pain long enough. Call **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** now for a RISK FREE consultation.



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.
- Recovery time is almost instant, not months or years.

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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- Patricia G.

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Union County Prosecutor's Office
The Union County Prosecutor's Office is pleased to announce that New Jersey's highly regarded ARRIVE Together program, aimed at providing compassionate response during 9-1-1 calls involving a mental health crisis, has been expanded to additional police departments in Union County.

The focus of the ARRIVE Together program is to provide individuals in crisis with whatever help they need as quickly and effectively as possible, by teaming up a police officer – specifically trained in crisis intervention — with a civilian certified mental health screener in order to respond to 9-1-1 calls relating to a mental health crisis. The officer and crisis worker literally arrive together. Both are in plain clothes, and arrive at the call in an unmarked police vehicle. During the encounter, the mental health screener takes the lead.

This focused approach both supports the individual facing a mental health crisis, and protects the responding officers. The intention is to get the person in crisis the proper help they need as quickly as possible, while also preventing escalation and facilitating any necessary de-escalation.

The ARRIVE Together team also follows-up on these specific calls to ensure that the individual is doing well and does not need additional mental health support.

"Heart is a core value of the program, as this program humanely gets to the heart of many of the difficulties of responding to calls involving a mental health crisis for both law enforcement and those in crisis" said Union County Prosecutor William A. Daniel.

"This partnership approach enables a quicker response time to get the individual the help they need, rather than having to wait for the later arrival of a mental health screener," Director of the Pre-Indictment Division Tiffany Wilson, who is also the UCPO Liaison for the ARRIVE Together Program, states. "It also helps to avoid having this person come in contact with the criminal justice system."

The Prosecutor said that, since its inception, it

is extremely promising that there have been no injuries or escalations associated with any Union County ARRIVE Together calls, specifically because nationally, half of the "Use of Force" reports arise from police responding to these types of calls.

Elizabeth and Linden Police Departments were quick to pilot the program in June of 2022, following its creation and the Office of the Attorney General's pilot launch in November 2021 in Cumberland County involving a partnership between the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office and the New Jersey State Police, who provide local police services in that part of the state.

Elizabeth Police Chief Sacca is optimistic about the benefits of the ARRIVE Together program. "Since the inception of ARRIVE together program in Elizabeth, in addition to the lack of force and injuries, the department has had great successes in aiding those experiencing homelessness. This success is not only a benefit for the individuals impacted, but a benefit for the relationship between the police department and the community as a whole."

The Roselle Park Police Department launched this program in December of 2022, followed by the current launch by the police departments in Clark, Cranford, Plainfield, Scotch Plains, and Westfield, along with the Union County Police Department and the Union County Sheriff's Office.

"Union County has led the way for the past two decades in sensitizing our law enforcement officers to the struggles of individuals dealing with the wide spectrum of mental illness," Prosecutor Daniel said. "We continue to offer law enforcement sensitivity training, including our intensive Crisis Intervention Team Training (CIT) and Autism Spectrum Awareness training, and de-escalation training, such as Integrated Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT)," he said.

"We are committed to partnering with the County community to tackle these tough issues, and to engage in honest dialogue with our citizens, with our eye on equality and social justice for all," he added.

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POLICE AND TEENS TOGETHER

Cranford Police Department

Members of the Cranford Police Department swapped places with Cranford High School Students during the annual Police and Teens Together (PATT) programming offered to Criminal Justice students at CHS. Detective Matthew Siessel, a trained PATT Program Facilitator, organized the event along with the assistance of members of the Juvenile Bureau, Patrol Division, Detective Bureau, Traffic Bureau and Community Outreach Unit. Partnering with the Cranford Police Department were Mrs. Mandy Charles, a Criminal Justice instructor at

CHS, and Mr. Mark Cantagallo, Principal of CHS.

PATT involves three days of shared experiences for students and police officers. Day one allows students to engage in honest and open conversations with police officers about their experiences - both positive and negative - with law enforcement. During day two, students take on the role of police officers and conduct mock motor vehicle stops, learning what tactics police officers utilize to ensure a safe and productive interaction with the public. Lastly, day three consists of learning about the officers "behind the

badge," demonstrating that police officers are regular people outside of their professions.

Students were able to see Body Worn Videos (BWC) of Cranford officers responding to various calls for service to show an officer's safety concerns and challenges with de-escalating tense crises.

With the goal of breaking down any barriers between law enforcement and Cranford's younger generation of residents, PATT has been offered to Cranford High School students since 2015. This year covered three separate classes of 10th-12th grade students.



Photos by Cranford Police Department



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ST. JOSEPH SOCIAL SERVICE CENTER BREAKS GROUND ON NEW FACILITIES

More than 100 supporters, partners and community leaders gathered at St. Joseph Social Service Center in Elizabeth on April 5 to celebrate the start of construction on the agency's new facilities, which will make it possible for the organization to expand and improve services to residents in need in Elizabeth and to achieve its vision of dignity for all. St. Joseph's is one of the largest social service agencies in Elizabeth and Union County, providing residents with food, clothing, household items, prescription assistance, health screenings, mental health counseling, job training and case management.

There are four components to the new facilities plan. The first is to build a food pantry. This new building will give St. Joseph's a dedicated space, a larger space, and a more functional space to operate its food pantry. Perhaps most importantly, the new building will allow the organization to offer a better food pantry model – an individual choice food pantry. With this model, clients will come at an appointed time and will be able to choose their food. The second project is to construct a clothing and household goods distribution center. Clothing and home goods will be displayed in different sections much like one would find in a retail store. The third project is to renovate the former parish hall and church building on campus to expand and enhance the many support services offered by the agency. The fourth project is to reconfigure and repave the parking lot.

Bernadette Murphy, Executive Director, remarked that the overarching goal of the plan is

to “serve our sisters and brothers in need with dignity.” At the Groundbreaking Event, she introduced the agency's new logo and tagline, “Connecting Communities – Nourishing Each Other.” To fulfill its mission, the agency relies on 6,000 volunteers who come from schools, community groups, businesses, churches and other houses of worship in five counties in New Jersey. “In addition to serving the hungry, St. Joseph's is also a place that feeds the hunger to serve,” stated Murphy. The volunteer program welcomes people of all ages, faiths, abilities and economic circumstances to provide hope and hospitality to their neighbors.

Karen Maher, Board President, thanked the audience for their contributions to the \$1,400,000 capital campaign, which will fund the facilities plan. The agency received support from foundations, businesses, community groups and individuals in Union County and surrounding communities. Harold “Kess” Kessler, Past Board President and the leader of the capital improvement plan, noted that “construction work will be completed in four phases over the next two years. In the first phase, the new food pantry and clothing distribution center will be built and outfitted and the driveway will be reconfigured and repaved.” Kessler stated that the construction work has been planned to ensure that services to the community will not be interrupted. “We are excited to begin a new chapter in St. Joseph's service to the community” noted Murphy.

To learn more about St. Joseph's please visit sjeliz.org.



(above, l-r) Sister Jacinta Fernandes, Founder and former Executive Director of St. Joseph's for 32 years, places soil in a planter in which a tree will be grown along with Julissa Campos, Vice President of the Board of Trustees.



(above r-l) Debbie Durand and Teresa LaStella, organizers for the groundbreaking event, greet guests at the Welcome Table.

Courtesy photos

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5K CELEBRATION OF LIFE - JUNE 11



NJ Sharing Network

NJ Sharing Network’s 5K Celebration of Life Walk and USATF Certified Race will be held on Sunday, June 11, at NJ Sharing Network, 691 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ. The event, which is presented by RWJBarnabas Health and Hackensack Meridian Health, is one of the Garden State’s largest and most-recognized charitable events. It brings together thousands of transplant recipients, donor families, living donors and dedicated volunteers and advocates. Funds raised by event participants, teams, sponsors, and contributors will support the

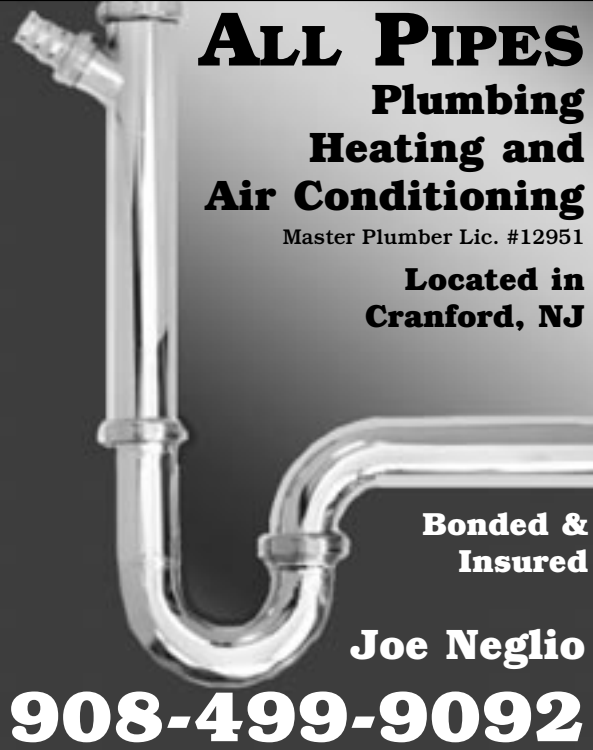
Sharing Network Foundation.

To sign up to participate in the 5K Celebration of Life or make a contribution to a team, visit SharingNetworkFoundation.org/5K.

According to United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), there are over 100,000 Americans – nearly 4,000 of whom live in New Jersey – waiting for a life-saving transplant. One organ and tissue donor can save eight lives and enhance the lives of over 75 others. To learn more, get involved, and join the National Donate Life Registry as an organ and tissue donor, visit NJSharingNetwork.org.



(above) NJ Sharing Network’s 5K Celebration of Life Will Unite Thousands of Organ and Tissue Donation Supporters in New Providence on June 11. To sign up to participate in the 5K Celebration of Life or make a contribution to a team, visit SharingNetworkFoundation.org/5K.



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NEW JERSEY VETERANS NETWORK MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE

Michael D. Boll, Director, NJVN

A few years ago, I was approached by a veteran who is a friend 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 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 the New Jersey Veteran's Network created our mobile outreach program.

In today's day and age, most of you have known a veteran or first responder who has taken their own life. We lose nearly 22 veterans and approximately 300 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 VA hospitals with PTSD and mental health programs are packed with patients and unfortunately, the numbers continue to increase. More of our first responders are also seeking help and are 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 as a team is that we must lose our 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 to being a men-tor 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. In the next few months we are excited to be launching the "Uniformed Heroes Project," which is a statewide peer support/mentorship program for veterans, first responders, and active duty military. This project is a collaboration between the NJ VFW, NJ American Legion, NJ FMBA, PFANJ, NJSPBA, NJ FOP, NJ MAVA, NJ legislators, other military/first responder organizations. The Uniformed Heroes Project will provide peer support training throughout the state for volunteers and host numerous recreational therapy events for our heroes in need.

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. Help us save Vets! We are always looking for volunteers, with various skills, to join the team.

If you are a veteran or family member that's in need of assistance; or are interested in volunteering, would like us to speak at your event, or contribute to our mission, call 973-332-1556 or email njvn1775@gmail.com. To learn more about the team please check out our website njvn.org (accomplishments). Help us save Vets!



(above) New Jersey Veterans Network veterans and volunteers at a recent Memorial Day Parade.



MARANO & SONS AUTO SALES NAMED FAMILY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Marano & Sons Auto Sales, located in Garwood, NJ, was awarded the Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce (GWACC) 'Family Business of the Year Award' during its 75th Anniversary Award Gala held on April 30th. The event brought together business leaders, community members, and elected officials to honor the achievements of the Chamber and its members. In all, 180 were there to enjoy the evening.

Written by Ralph Marano Sr:

In 1952, at the age of 5, I moved from Newark to Garwood with my parents. I grew up in Garwood, went to school here and high school in Clark. ALJ is where I started my career when I took auto shop. That's when they offered work programs and options to students who did not want to pursue a college education. In May 22,

1965, I won the Plymouth Trouble Shooting Contest in the State of New Jersey. In 1965 I worked for a VW Agency through a Work Study Program. Upon graduation in 1965 I got a job as a mechanic for Sears Roebuck Automotive Center for \$2 an hour when minimum wage was \$1.35 an hour. I worked my way up to store manager while also working nights and weekends with my father selling cars at a small car lot in Sewaren, NJ.

I have always had a passion for cars. I had my first car at 12 years old. It was a 1947 Ford.

In 1968 I married my high school sweetheart (Adeline) and we had 2 sons (Jim & Ralph Jr). Today we all work together in our family business Marano & Sons Auto Sales, Inc., which we opened in 1976 at 507 South Avenue, Garwood, NJ on a part time basis. After being

seriously injured in an automobile accident in 1978 I was forced to give up my job as manager at Sears and pursue my career in car sales full time in 1981.

I worked along with my wife and a longtime employee, Mike Tango, who started with me at the age of 16 and has become a part of the Marano Family and still works for us today at the age of 56. When our boys were old enough to clean cars, they joined in to help make this business a family success. By 1996 both sons had graduated college and decided to make the family business their choice of career. More space was needed for everyone to explore what he did best. This was the beginning of an additional location at 150 South Ave, Garwood, NJ. Although both sons can handle every aspect of the family business, each son has his own special interests and preferences. Both Jim and Ralph Jr share my enthusiasm for cars and now our grandson Nicholas has become a part of Marano & Sons.

You can find Ralph Jr along with Mike Tango at our original 507 South Avenue location specializing in trucks and SUV's while Jim along with Ralph Sr and Nicholas are at 150 South Ave which specializes predominantly in cars. My wife Adeline runs the office along with long time employee Ryane Brennan and in between classes or vacation breaks our granddaughter Madison helps out.

Both boys have gifted us with 6 beautiful grandchildren, Nicholas, Victoria, Samantha, Madison, Courtney, and Cole. It is not unusual to see any one of them in the office at any time. All four girls are currently in college pursuing specific careers and Cole has just started high school and hopefully he will join all the Marano men in the future.

We never dreamed starting out in 1976 on a small lot with 4 cars in a .7-square mile town we would grow to be such a success and be such an asset to the community. We are proud of what we can do for the community. Marano & Sons has been honored with the Accomplished Professional Community Contributor Award and the Education Foundation People Make a Difference Award and now this honor. We also give 2 scholarships to students graduating from ALJ High School and are not going to college but are pursuing a trade.

It gives us great pleasure as a family to give back to the community and hope our family is able to preserve our legacy for years to come.

GWACC (Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce)

For over 75 years, the GWACC has been connecting commerce and community. The GWACC promotes the economic prosperity of businesses primarily in Clark, Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Westfield. It is the largest association of businesses and nonprofits in our area. Members include business owners, professionals, managers and operators. Membership cultivates the opportunity to build relationships, partner, make referrals, increase business, attend networking sessions that support the community. For more information visit gwaccnj.com.



(above) The Marano family with the Garwood Mayor Jen Blumenstock.

Courtesy photo

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