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A VERY SPECIAL TURTLE BACK ZOO TRIP

Submitted by Kristina Petti

The annual Friendship Day at the Turtle Back Zoo was held Monday, October 2nd, 2023. This is a collaborative event hosted by the East Central and North Central Elks Lodges.

It was a perfect fall day for participants to walk around the park and learn about the animals on display while enjoying activities, games, a DJ, and face painting sponsored by Elks from the North Central District.

Elks from the East Central District, with Lodges in Stirling, Summit, Mountainside, Springfield, Cranford, Union, and Rahway, provided, prepared, and served 1,200 hot dog meals to hungry visitors.

The Elks' sponsorship of the event provided a fun and educational day out for students from the following special education programs in Rahway: Preschool Disability, Multiple Disability, Autism, and Daisy.

Michelle Perez, one of the MD teachers at Roosevelt Elementary School organized the day, along with Roosevelt's very own recent retiree Donna Fidecaro, who was the point person from the Elks. Their collaboration and close attention to detail made the day special for all who attended.

The day began with all students receiving matching shirts designed by special education teacher Lindsay DeNigris and paid for by the Rahway Elks Special Children's Committee.

Highlights of the day by Colleen Kurdyla:

Students were surprised to see a cheetah and dog share a habitat.

- Watching the penguins getting fed.
- The monkeys were very busy playing and swinging all around.
- The prairie dog exhibit had an area where students could stick their heads in a clear dome and be face-to-face with a prairie dog.
- Watching the sea lions swim underwater, splash, and dive was fun for all.
- Everyone's favorite was the train ride.

The students and staff are so grateful to the Elks for hosting this wonderful event for our students. It was a day of fun, laughter, and learning



for everyone involved.

If you are interested in learning more about our organization or becoming a member, please visit our website rahwayelks.org and follow us on Facebook: Rahway Elks #1075. To become a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks you must be 21 or over, an American citizen, and believe in God.



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AUBREY MASCOL TAKES FIRST PLACE IN COUNTY POSTER CONTEST

Rahway Public Schools

Franklin Elementary School in Rahway is beaming with pride as sixth-grader Aubrey Mascol clinches first place in the Prevention Link's countywide 2023 "What's Your Anti-Drug?" Poster Contest, held in honor of the 25th anniversary of Red Ribbon Week.

Mascol's captivating artwork, titled "Don't Huff! Don't Puff! Stay away from that stuff!", powerfully conveyed her message of committing to stay drug-free and resonated with the community, earning her the top spot among a pool of talented participants. Her poster stood out for its creative expression and impactful message, emphasizing the importance of making healthy choices.

Franklin Elementary School applauds Mascol's achievement and commends all the sixth-grade students who participated in the contest for their dedication to promoting a drug-free lifestyle. Their participation reflects the school's commitment to fostering a healthy and supportive environment for its students.

"We are incredibly proud of Aubrey and all our students who showcased their creativity and commitment to staying drug-free through this contest," said Dr. Patrick Holness, Principal of Franklin Elementary School. "Their efforts exemplify the values we instill in our students,

encouraging them to make positive choices that enhance their well-being and pave the way for future success."

Mascol's winning poster, with its catchy title and impactful message, will be prominently displayed at Franklin Elementary School, serving as a constant reminder of the importance of making healthy choices and embracing a drug-free lifestyle.



(above) Aubrey Mascol and her 1st place winning poster

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RAHWAY ELKS POLISH NIGHT FUNDRAISER

Submitted by Kristina Petti, SCC Chair

On Saturday, November 4th, 2023, the Rahway Elks Special Children's Committee hosted a Polish Night Fundraiser. We raised over \$1,000 due to the generosity and support of our members and guests. This was our lodge's 5th Polish Night in the past 8 years and each one was better than the last.

A huge thank you to Pulaski Meat Products in Linden, NJ for donating 6 rings of kelbasis, as they do every year. It is greatly appreciated. Also, Syrena's in Linden discounted the 20 dozen perogies for us. Members Christel Mocekis and Melissa Knudsen donated trays of stuffed cabbage. All of these wonderful contributions were vital to the success of this fundraiser.

Over 50 people purchased tickets, members

and guests. We ate, listened to polish music, and had a great time. Us Elks really know how to put the FUN in fundraiser.

Our next Fundraiser will be a Prime Rib Night on Wednesday, December 13th 2023 @6 p.m.

If you are interested in attending an event in the future as a guest, please reach out via Facebook messenger or email kristinarahwayelks@gmail.com.

If you are interested in learning more about our organization or becoming a member please visit our website rahwayelks.org and follow us on Facebook: Rahway Elks #1075. To become a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks you must be 21 or over, an American citizen, and believe in God.

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Christmas morning 1955, and I was 8 years old. I woke up and saw it was bright outside with the sun shining on the days old snow. I quickly ran down the stairs to the living room and saw my dad sitting on the floor next to the Christmas tree, smiling at my reaction to my first Lionel train set up and running under the tree. I gave him a hug and immediately started to run the train just as Young Sheldon from *The Big Bang* would.

Fast forward, December 1972 and our first Christmas for Fran, my wife and myself as newlyweds living in the second floor of my in-laws' 2 family. My mother-in-law (whom I loved) was so excited when I brought her outside to view the light display I created for her on Fulton St in Elizabeth, Mom P said "Holy Cats I never thought I would experience such a wonderful sight at my home."

Now it's Christmas 1975 as we celebrate our first Christmas in our own circa 1915 home. We had our families over for Christmas Eve. While everyone was eating I snuck out to change into my Santa suit. I rang bells and came down to many ho ho ho's and to a facial expression on Gramps's 87-year-old face that was worth a 1000 warm smiles and then went outside to extend Christmas wishes.

All these memories stand out of hundreds of wonderful memories and I hope you also will have wonderful memories. This holiday season Fran and I wish you and yours the happiest and healthiest of all seasons

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Feliz Navidad and Happy Kwanzaa.
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BOOK TASTING SPARKS CURIOSITY

Rahway Public Schools

In a delightful display of literary exploration, Ms. Klein's 4th-grade class at Roosevelt Elementary School embarked on a captivating book tasting adventure, immersing themselves in a diverse array of genres and igniting their passion for reading.

The books donated by Rahway's school district Office of curriculum and instruction transformed the classroom into a literary haven, with five stations arranged to showcase a spectrum of genres.

The 4th grade bookworms eagerly navigated each station, savoring the literary delights presented before them. Armed with a menu provided by Ms. Klein, they documented their literary journey, answering thought-provoking questions that delved into the heart of each book.

"What do you think this book is about?" they pondered, their imaginations ignited. "What did you like?" they inquired. With each book they sampled, students discovered hidden gems that drew on their curiosity and expanded their literary horizons.

Ms. Klein observed with delight as her students ventured beyond their comfort zones, embracing genres they might not have initially considered. "It is wonderful to witness students gravitate towards books they may not have initially been drawn to," Ms. Klein remarked, her voice filled with pride and enthusiasm.

The book tasting proved to be an eye-opening experience, fostering a deeper appreciation for the power of storytelling and the boundless possibilities that lie within the pages of a book.



Photos by Rahway Public Schools

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HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Rahway High School is thrilled to announce its upcoming production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," a Tony Award-winning musical comedy that promises an evening of laughter, music, and fun.

Set to take the stage on December 8-9, 2023, at 7:30 p.m., Rahway High School's talented cast and crew are gearing up to bring this whimsical and heartwarming tale to life. The production will be held at Rahway High School Center for the Performing Arts, located at 1012 Madison Ave. in Rahway.

"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" follows the journey of a group of quirky, lovable misfit students as they compete in the intense and highly competitive world of spelling bees. Filled with humor, touching moments, and catchy tunes, the musical explores themes of friendship, competition, and the pressure to succeed.

Tickets for the production are now available for purchase at rwhs.booktix.com.



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FRANKLIN FARMS

JERSEY CARES COAT DRIVE

Submitted by Dyan McMillen

Grover Cleveland Elementary School is proud to announce that it is participating in the Jersey Cares Coat Drive for the second year in a row. The school is accepting donations of new or gently used coats for those in need. Coats can be dropped off at the school during school hours, Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., thru December 22nd, 2023.

The Jersey Cares Coat Drive is a statewide initiative that collects and distributes coats to people of all ages in need. Last year, the drive collected over 20,000 coats, which were distributed to over 100 nonprofit organizations throughout New Jersey.

"We are excited to participate in the Jersey Cares Coat Drive again this year," said Nurse Giametta of Grover Cleveland Elementary School. "We know that many families in our community struggle to afford new coats for their children, and we want to do our part to help. We encourage everyone to donate a coat, no matter how big or small."

To donate a coat, simply drop it off at the Grover Cleveland Elementary School office during school hours, Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, from November 13th to December 22nd, 2023.

All coats will be cleaned and sorted before being distributed to those in need.

Submitted Dr. Patrick Holness

Nothing says fall like pumpkin spice, and as a matter of fact, pumpkin is everything, in my humble opinion. The savory smells, taste, and autumn colors set the stage for the holiday season. This time of year is synonymous with warm apple cider, cinnamon donuts, and pumpkin picking.

Favorable weather conditions, blue skies, and crisp cool, moderate temperatures created the perfect backdrop for pumpkin picking. Franklin students in pre-k and kindergarten grades had the chance to use their imagination as they traveled to their school's very own "Franklin Farms." Who remembers the Magic School Bus? As a child, I vividly remember the wonderful adventures Ms. Frizzle took her class of students on. Some were more adventurous than others; nonetheless, there was lots of learning on the journey. While we

couldn't physically make it to the farm, we magically brought the farm to our school.

Travel with me as I recount the Franklin Farms experience. If you are fortunate enough to work with children, their initial reactions to things when they are excited, are unparalleled to the highest forms of sheer joy, and nothing even comes close. With pupils dilated, huge smiles, uncontrollable laughter, and screams of excitement, I can undoubtedly say the kids were thrilled!

Each student had a moment to peruse the aisles of the pumpkin patch, picking the most suitable pumpkin they liked. After careful thought and deliberation, they all made good choices. Before each group was loaded on the bus, the moment ended with a group photo on the hay bale. We hope our students enjoyed their magical trip to Franklin Farms.



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RED RIBBON WEEK

Submitted by Dyan McMillen

Grover Cleveland celebrated Red Ribbon Week with a variety of activities and events designed to promote drug prevention and healthy living. Students and staff wore red on Monday to show their support for a drug-free lifestyle. On Tuesday, they wore hats to "say hats off to being healthy" On Wednesday, they wore camo to "fight for your health! Drugs are the enemy." On Thursday, they wore neon to "say we are too bright for bullying and drugs." And on Friday they wore tie-dye to say peace out to drugs."

"Red Ribbon Week is an important opportunity to remind our students about the dangers of drug use and the importance of making healthy choices," said Mrs. Giammetta, School Nurse at Grover Cleveland. "We are proud of our students and staff for their participation in Red Ribbon Week and their commitment to living a drug-free life."



(above) Wednesday was wear camo to "fight for your health!"

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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. Additions 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.

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FAMILY FUN BEGINS AT THE GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA

At The Gateway Family YMCA, individuals and families find more than just a place to work out. With opportunities to connect with new people, develop new skills and explore new interests, the Y facilitates the discovery of new passions and assists in gaining a greater sense of purpose for all. For local families, The Gateway Family YMCA provides a fun and unique opportunity to support all ages, together or apart, within the same organization.

“At the Y, we have the unique opportunity, and mission, to support all. We strive to provide inclusive, equitable and innovative programming and services for all ages, and commit to supporting individuals and families throughout the 17 communities we serve in Eastern Union County and Northern Middlesex County,” stated Melynda A. Disla, President and CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. “At our Y, everyone has a place to go where they can feel supported and receive help. We are proud to be the place where adults can find life balance; children can reach their full potential; seniors can be active and social; and families can connect and strengthen relationships.”

The Gateway Family YMCA offers a variety of programs to help achieve greater health and well-being, nurture youth and inspire individuals to give back to better their community. Program information and registration is available online at tgfymca.org for programs including swimming lessons, youth sports, active older adult fitness, dance, gymnastics, Esports, WISE Community Services and chronic disease self-management programs. Through the 7th Grade Initiative and 7th Grade Leaders Club, youth are supported with a complimentary membership, leadership opportunities and special events.

The Gateway Family YMCA provides individuals and families with the opportunity to improve their health and well-being and connect with the greater community, all while participating in their favorite program or activity, either at the Y, or virtually from home. Social events, affinity clubs, family special events, programs, activities and specialized children’s theme events provide the variety of activities



necessary to keep everyone engaged. No other organization provides the breadth of programming inclusive of all ages.

“Our goal is to provide a seamless opportunity to make healthy living easy and equitable for all ages,” stated Rodger D. Koerber EVP, Chief Operating Officer. “We know that social and mental well-being are increasingly important for all. At the Y, neighbors from all backgrounds and walks of life can discover common ground, broaden their perspectives, and support one another. We like to say there are no strangers, only friends you haven’t met yet.”

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strengthening community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose and each other, the Y focuses on empowering young people, improving health and well-being and inspiring action in and across communities. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives and generations, the Y ensures that all have access to the opportunities, relationships, and resources necessary to learn, grow and thrive. The Gateway Family YMCA is a non-profit charitable organization serving Eastern Union County and Northern Middlesex County for over 123 years. Through the Y’s Annual Support Campaign, Membership For All Financial Assistance is available to those who qualify.

To learn more about The Gateway Family YMCA, visit tgfymca.org or contact the Elizabeth Branch (908-355-9622), Five Points Branch (908-688-9622), Rahway Branch (732-388-0057), or the Wellness Center Branch (908-349-9622) for more information.

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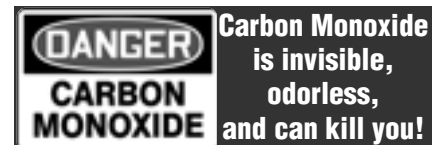
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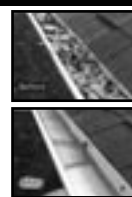
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PUMPKIN PICKING AND PETTING ZOO

Submitted by by Dyan McMillen

The Grover Cleveland Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) hosted a successful pumpkin picking and petting zoo event on October 23, 2023. The event was held at the school grounds and was for the Pre-K and Kindergarten students. The PTA partnered with A. Casola Farms in Holmdel, NJ to provide the pumpkins and petting zoo animals. Children had the opportunity to pick their own pumpkins, pet goats, sheep, and rabbits.

The weather was perfect for the event, and the children had a wonderful time.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

To benefit Relay for Life of Rahway & American Cancer Society

Bring the kids to Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 2nd, from 8:00 - 10:00 a.m., at Applebee's, Aviation Plaza, 671 West Edgar Road, Linden. Breakfast includes, pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, and a beverage (coffee, tea, juice, or soda).

Tickets are \$12 per person, \$6 for children 5 and under.

To purchase tickets, contact Paula at 732-331-9520, or paulaspad4@gmail.com, or Renee Sarnicki can be reached Monday through Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at 732-382-5550, or reneesarnickiacs@aol.com. Tickets can be paid for via Venmo @RahwayRFL (reference "Donation-Breakfast with Santa"). Cash or checks (made payable to "Cash") can be

dropped off (on Fridays only from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., unless other arrangements have been made) at the Rahway Regional Cancer Center, 892 Trussler Avenue, Rahway, in an envelope labeled with your name.

All proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society in funding breakthrough research, clinical trials, and services for cancer patients and their families. Your participation helps make a huge difference in this fight!

If you are unable to attend this event, please visit our website at relayforlife.org/rahwaynj for information regarding cancer prevention, support and services for patients and families, survivor registration, ways to get involved, future events, or to make a tax-deductible donation.

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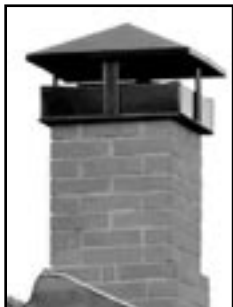
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RAHWAY'S OWN RECOGNIZES JANIAH MARRON-BROWN

Submitted by Dyan McMillen

Rahway's Own, a program that celebrates the accomplishments of Rahway residents, has selected Janiah Marron-Brown, a student at Grover Cleveland Elementary School, as a Rising Star for her volunteer work at her church.

Janiah is a kind and compassionate young lady who is always willing to help others. She

volunteers at her church every Sunday, where she helps to set up for services, greet worshippers, and teach Sunday school. She is also a member of the church's youth choir.

Janiah is also a dedicated student. She is an honor roll student and is involved in several extracurricular activities, including the school's drama club and student council.

"Janiah is a wonderful role model for our youth," said Debbie Antczak, 6th grade teacher at Grover Cleveland. "She is always willing to put others before herself and is dedicated to making her community a better place."

Janiah was recognized for her accomplishments at the Rahway's Own Rising Stars ceremony on October 16, 2023.



(above, l-r) Janiah Marron-Brown with Mrs. Antczak.



(above) Janiah Marron-Brown and her family, Christopher, her grandparents, and her sister Jasmine.

Courtesy photos



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COPING WITH LOSS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

There is so much pressure to be happy in our culture, especially at the holidays. We are supposed to have a Happy Thanksgiving, a “merry little Christmas” or a Happy Hanukkah. But grief doesn’t take a holiday.

Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss would like to offer support to those navigating the challenges of grieving during the holiday season and offer some coping strategies as well. On Thursday December 14th from 6:30-8 pm, Imagine will offer a workshop on Coping with Loss During the Holidays. The free workshop will be held at their center at 244 Sheffield Street in Mountainside and is open to adults and children grades 3 and older.

Imagine’s Grief Educator, Connie Palmer, LCSW will present the workshop in English and Training and Education Director, Veronica Ortiz, LPC and Bilingual Program Manager, Sonia Nuñez will present the workshop at the same time in Spanish. Pizza dinner is available prior to the session beginning at 6:15 for those who sign up. Hot cocoa and cookies will be served as well.

If you are looking for support as you cope with a loss this holiday season, the staff at Imagine would like to help, and hope to see you at the workshop on the 14th.

Imagine is a 501c3 nonprofit that offers free year-round grief support groups for children ages 3-18 and young adults 19-30 who are coping with

a loss due to death. Concurrently, support groups are available for the parents and guardians of the children in the groups and offered in English and Spanish. Imagine also offers grief and loss education and training to the community. For more information please contact Imagine at 908-264-3100 or info@imagineenj.org.



(above) If you’re interested in attending the workshop presented in English, please scan the QR code or visit Imagine’s website at imagineenj.org/education-training/community-webinars/ to register. Registration is not required for the workshop presented in Spanish.

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MASQUERADE AT THE ACADEMY

Kristina Petti, Rahway Public Schools
The PBSIS (Positive Behavior Support In Schools) ran a Masquerade Dance on October 26th, that had about 150 students in attendance. The kids all came dressed to impress and many had a masquerade mask on as well. They all had a blast.

Trisha Grimes and the rest of the PTO were a huge help in making this successful. They reached out to local restaurants and requested food donations. A huge thank you to Alfonso's Catering, Rocky's Bar & Grill, and Rod's Fish & Chips for the generous donations. Other food was provided by Tony's Pizza Cafe and Ortega's

BBQ Churrasqueira.
Academy administrators, teachers, paras, and parents also made donations and helped chaperone the dance as well.
This dance would not have been successful without the support of our entire community, so thank you!



Courtesy Photos

(above) PTO Members selling bracelets and juice blood bags

(above) VP James Overton, Superintendent Dr. Aleya Shoieb, Principal Isabel Colon

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GROVER CLEVELAND SCHOOL HONORS VETERANS

Submitted by Dyan McMillen

Grover Cleveland Elementary School celebrated Veterans Day on November 7th with a special assembly honoring those who have served in the United States military. The assembly featured music, presentations, and remarks from special guests, including local veterans Gary Bresinger and Steven Brown.

Mr. Bresinger, father of student Samantha Bresinger, served in the United States Marine Corps. Mr. Brown, grandfather of student Zak Awkward, served in the United States Marine Corps. Both veterans shared their stories of service with the students and spoke about the importance of remembering and honoring

veterans.

The assembly also featured Mr. Barry Rosenzweig, who served in the Army and played patriotic songs that children sang along to.

"We are so grateful for the opportunity to honor our veterans and teach our students about the importance of their service," said Principal Al Giambrone. "Our veterans have made many sacrifices to protect our freedom, and we owe them a debt of gratitude."

The assembly was a special event for the entire Grover Cleveland community. It was a time to remember and honor those who have served our country, and to teach our children about the importance of patriotism and service.



(above) Mr. Giambrone, Mr. Barry Rosenzweig, Zak Awkward, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bresinger, Samantha Bresinger, and Mr. McCormick.

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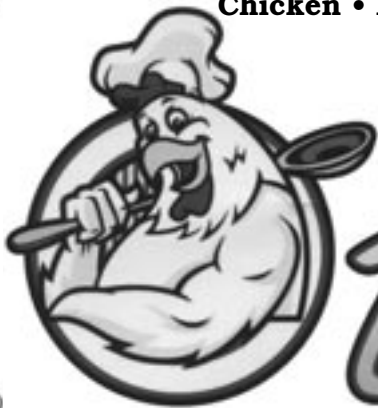
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PICTURESQUE RAHWAY – LARGE ESTATES LOST OVER YEARS

Submitted by Al Shipley, City Historian and Rahway Library Research Consultant

On Thursday, May 27, 1948, the editors and staff of the Rahway-News Record published a 180-page issue to commemorate the 125th anniversary of their newspaper. The extensive issue contained nine sections which covered all aspects of community life including the history of Rahway as a city of homes and industry. One article bemoaned the loss of some of the elegant estates that once graced the streets of many neighborhoods. The article cited several reasons for the loss of the large mansions and feared more of these gems would be razed in the future. It's obvious their fears were justified as large properties were taken down during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. The three magnificent structures that follow are examples of the beauties that were lost.

Courtesy photos



(above) Tuscan villa “castle” was the home of Jacob Shotwell, a prominent citizen.

The Tuscan villa “castle” was the home of Jacob Shotwell, a prominent citizen who was Director of the Rahway Gas Light Company and vice-president of the Rahway Savings Bank. Built in the 1870s, “Elmwood” was located

about 50 yards back from the corner of Elm and Esterbrook Avenues. The imposing stucco home featured a three-story flat-roofed entrance tower with central recessed entry, arched Palladian windows, over-hanging roof lines, and heavy support brackets, all characteristics of this masculine architectural style. It later became the home of Frank Stillman, a civic leader who served on many local boards. In the late 1950s the home became the property of the Zion Lutheran congregation and was used as their Sunday school building. It was razed in 1975.



(above) “Elsmere Villa,” the estate of George Bracher.

“Elsmere Villa,” the estate of George Bracher, was located at the end of East Hazelwood Avenue near the city limits just before the corner of Hart Street. Built in 1849, the three-story, 22 room Gothic Revival structure was set far back off the road on beautiful park-like grounds. The romantic Gothic style was characterized by pointed arches, steep gabled roofs, lacy bargeboards, colonnaded verandas, oriel windows, and finials on roof peaks. By the mid-1930s the residence was converted into a meeting hall and tavern and eventually became the Royal Gardens Picnic Grove, where social clubs held their outings. The building was torn down in the mid-1970s.



(above) Peter Tillman’s home was touted as the largest home in Rahway. Mr. Tillman served three terms as an assemblyman in the State Legislature and was Rahway’s tax assessor.

Touted as the largest home in Rahway, the residence of Peter Tillman stood on the north side of west Milton Avenue near the corner of Pierpont Street. Mr. Tillman served three terms as an assemblyman in the State Legislature and was Rahway’s tax assessor. Architectural features included an ornate front entrance porch, triangular crowning over porch and windows, dentil molding, a three-story tower with conical roof, and massive chimneys with caps. By the 1920s, the massive home became too large to accommodate single family living and was converted into a multi-family dwelling with as many as six units. It served in that capacity until it was razed in 1967. The Clifford Case Senior Apartments were erected on the site in 1985.

Fortunately, handsome, “picturesque” homes still stand in Rahway neighborhoods, many from the 18th and 19th centuries with historical or architectural importance. City officials have shown an interest in protecting these valuable properties and several families are currently restoring their homes to showcase their significance and at the same time to increase their value. Let’s hope we heed the warnings given in the 1948 anniversary issue and continue to make efforts to protect the legacy of our city’s housing stock.

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THE HISTORY OF VANILLA

In December of 2019, I wrote an article for Our Town on "The History of Chocolate" so I thought Vanilla would be a good follow up topic. I must admit I'm surprised how little I knew about vanilla. For example vanilla is the world's most favorite spice. It is also the most labor-intensive crop in the world. Today there are now over 150 different varieties of vanilla orchid plants, each imparting its own unique characteristic.

Vanilla is believed to have been initially cultivated by the Totonac people in Mexico, in the region of Totonacapan. This region is now encapsulated by the state of Veracruz in modern-day Mexico. It is unknown how long exactly the Totonac had known about and cultivated Vanilla, but in the 15th century, the Aztecs conquered the Totonacs.

Afterwards the Aztecs would get a large part of their tribute from the Totonacs in the form of Vanilla and the Aztecs, in turn, used the vanilla for their Chocolatl. They discovered the value that the black vanilla pod brought in flavoring and medicinal benefits to their culture. The Aztecs were the first to use both drinks, often mixing them together. The mixture was much like our "hot chocolate" which they called it "xocolatl."

Legend says Aztec Emperor Montezuma was quoted saying xocolatl is a "Divine drink, which builds up resistance and fights fatigue. A cup of this precious drink permits a man to walk for a whole day without food."

In 1519, Hernando Cortez was served a beverage mixture of cocoa and vanilla by Aztec Emperor Montezuma, most likely the xocolatl. Both flavors were so well received by the Spanish conqueror that he brought the cocoa and vanilla beverage back to Europe as a treasure from the New World. Europeans quickly fell in love with vanilla and found that it could be used in a wide variety of recipes and beverages. They imported the cured vanilla beans from Mexico until the mid-1800s as a luxury spice for the elite class.

With European expansion around the world, cuttings of the vanilla vine were transplanted to other tropical regions to see if it would grow outside of its native region, Mexico. The vines did grow, however they did it not bear fruit.

Finally, a Belgian botanist, Charles Morren realized that this was because the Melipone Bee (native to Mexico), was the only source of



(above) Vanilla is a spice made from the seeds hidden in the long seed pods of a "Vanilla orchid".

pollination for the vanilla orchid. This bee had developed a longer proboscis (mouth) which could reach into the vanilla pod flowers. Symbiotic relationships like this are common in nature and one of the reasons planting natives in our area is so important.

The future of vanilla came down to the discovery of a young 12 year old slave named Edmond Albius on the island of Réunion, who in 1841 figured out how to hand-pollinate the vanilla orchids. This discovery changed the game, and allowed global cultivation of the plant. With France the primary driver, leading to a number of former French colonies becoming the primary producers of vanilla, namely Madagascar and Réunion. Indonesia and a handful of other nations, Tahiti, Mexico and Tonga make up the remaining majority of the world's vanilla production. In fact today, Madagascar and Réunion produce somewhere between 70% and 80% of all vanilla in the world.

When the Spaniards in turn came and took the land from the Aztecs, vanilla was one of the first spices/ingredients to be brought home. Cortez was the European "discoverer" of vanilla, and he brought home a large supply of vanilla to the Spanish royal court. From there it spread quickly into the European palate, but only as an additive



(above) Past President of The Rahway Garden Club, James Keane, has been researching and answering garden questions since 1995.

Visit 'Keane Gardener' blog at: keanegardener.blogspot.com

in chocolate products.

In the early 17th century, Queen Elizabeth's apothecary invented non-chocolate vanilla-flavored sweetmeats, vanilla became a core ingredient in its own right. By the early 18th century the French were using vanilla to flavor everything from ice-cream (discovered by non-other than Thomas Jefferson in the 1780s) to pastries, but it wasn't until 1805 that the first known vanilla recipe appears in a cookbook, "The Art of Cookery" by Hannah Glasse.

Due to the world's vanilla obsession, there are also many different vanilla products: gourmet vanilla extract, vanilla beans, vanilla extract, organic vanillas, and many more!

This information in this article is gathered from two sites on the internet.

Thanks to 'Vera Mexicana', A Brief History Of Vanilla and also 'Rodelle Kitchen' for your research on this topic.

Happy Gardening

James



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CHANGING LIVES

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&
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Light Refreshments will be served
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4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700	\$1900
6 Units	6.5" x 6.25" or 10" x 4"	\$240	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1400	\$1600	\$1800	\$2000	\$2200
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12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700	\$3000
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000	\$3400
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Tree Lighting at 6pm

Activities:
Bounce Houses 2-5pm
Live Performances
Ice Sculptor
Fire Pits
Hot Chocolate
Strolling Characters
Pictures with Santa
Carolers
Giveaways
and more!

cityofrahway Mayor Raymond A. Giacobbe
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Mayor Raymond A. Giacobbe and the Rahway City Council Present

Santa on Parade in Rahway!

SATURDAY DEC. 16
12PM - 3PM



As he prepares for his Christmas Eve rounds, Santa will tour Rahway, escorted by the Mayor, City Council members, Rahway Police Department, Rahway Fire Department, and Rahway EMS. The route will be passing several City parks as well as through Rahway River Park.
Visit www.CityOfRahway.com/santaonparade to see Santa's route.

cityofrahway Mayor Raymond A. Giacobbe
Rahway is community!
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Relay For Life of Rahway – Team Rahway Regional Cancer Center
Invites you to bring the Kids on
Saturday, December 2, 2023



Breakfast from: 8:00 am to 10:00 am
Location: Applebee's at Linden in Aviation Plaza
671 W Edgar Road - Linden, NJ 07036
Cost: \$12.00 per person \$6.00 Children 5 & under
Venmo ■ RahwayRFL or {Check payable to Cash or Cash}
Venmo you must state "Donation"

For tickets please contact: Paula 732.331.9520 paulasp4@gmail.com
Or Renee Sarnicki 732.382.5550 - Monday - Wednesday, Friday 8-4
ReneeSarnickiACS@aol.com

Tickets can be picked up at the Cancer Center 892 Trussler Place, Rahway, NJ on Fridays only from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, unless special arrangements have been made.

 **Santa needs to know who is coming!**
Advanced purchase is recommended.

Meal includes: Pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs and a beverage (Coffee, juice, soda or tea.)
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Mayor Raymond A. Giacobbe and the Rahway City Council Present

Rahway Winter Wonderland

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