

# CRANFORD MONTHLY NJ

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## SCOUTS GIVE ELVES A HAND WITH TOYS FOR TOTS DRIVE

*Submitted by Dr. D. Michael Hart*

Every December, Santa's elves are working furiously to make enough toys for all the children of the world. This year the scouts in Patriots' Path Council, Boy Scouts of America, gave them a hand. The scouts collected over 1600 new, high-quality toys worth \$30,000 to donate to the US Marines Toys For Tots Program. The Marines distribute these toys to disadvantaged children, locally, where the toys are collected.

A good example is the event at Fords Fire Station Number 1, which is the charter organization for 5 scouting units. They held a holiday party with hot cocoa and cookies, and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Clause for the purpose to "Fill Santa's Sleigh". Cub Scout Pack 26 (girls), Scout Troop 26 (girls), Cub Scout Pack 53 (boys), Scout Troop 53 (boys), and coed Venture Crew 7, all got together to party and do some good in the world. The five units were able to have some fun, take photos with Santa, collect 190 toys, and deliver them to the Marines the next day.

Other scout units participating in the Council wide Toy Drive were: The Flintlocks BSA, Inc.; Pack 20 & Troop 128 (East Hanover); Pack 137 (Cranford); Troop 125 (South Plainfield); Pack 6 (Chatham); Patriots' Path Council Executive Committee; and Pack 54 Succasunna.



Units which brought toys directly to the US Marines were: Troops 75 & 80 (Cranford); Pack 145 (Clark); and Pack 318 (Edison). Troop 1150 (Sparta) brought toys to Operation Toy Train; which then in turn, delivers them to the Marines.

Toys collected included: basketballs, soccer ball, footballs, board games, dolls, cars, trains, books, art supplies, new stuffed animals, & LEGO's.

Volunteers helping this effort included: Kathy Perna, Council Community Chair, with organization; Timothy Farrel offered helpful information; Flintlocks President John Koneski who created a joint collection effort for the two Troops in Cranford; Robert Somes brought toys from the Raritan Valley Roundtable to the Fords Fire Dept. and helped organize the event there. The Flintlocks group all donated a lot of toys, and encouraged their respective units, in order to make the Toy Drive a Council wide success.

Last year, 2022, the Toys For Tots program collected and distributed 22 million toys to fulfil the holiday hopes and dreams of 8.7 million underprivileged children. [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org)

The Patriots' Path Council, Boy Scouts of America, consists of over 300 scouting units in 5 counties of northern New Jersey. Cub Scouts consist of girl Packs or boy Packs and include children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Scouts consist of girl Troops or boy Troops from 5th grade through age 18. Three additional programs are coed, and go from age 14 up to age 21: Sea Scouts; Explorers- which focus on specific careers; and Venture Crew - which go on high adventure trips. The Flintlocks are group of retired senior scouters who volunteer all year round to support the Council programs. Facebook Page "Flintlocks" The Scouting program focuses on developing good citizens, learning useful skills and hobbies, exploring careers, and making lifelong friends. The website for the Patriots' Path Council is [www.ppcbsa.org](http://www.ppcbsa.org) To find a scout unit near you, go to the website [www.beascout.org](http://www.beascout.org).



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## CHS PRODUCTION - URINETOWN

Cranford High School Performing Arts Department proudly presents Urinetown (yes, like urine – yes, that’s the title) on  
March 1 at 7:30 p.m.,  
March 2 at 7:30 p.m.,  
March 3 at 2:00 p.m.  
Premiering on Broadway in 2001, with music by Mark Hollman, book by Greg Kotis, and lyrics by Hollman and Kotis, Urinetown centers on a world where a 20-year drought has limited the water supply so severely, that citizens are

forced to pay to use the bathroom - or suffer the harsh consequences. We’ve said too much already, we wouldn’t want to spoil the show!  
You better “Run, Freedom, Run” to buy your tickets by emailing Mrs. Elizabeth Adam [adams@cranfordschools.org](mailto:adams@cranfordschools.org) or visiting [chs.booktix.com](http://chs.booktix.com), starting February 4.  
If you want to know “What is Urinetown?” then we hope to see you at the performances!  
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# JACK GOODWIN EARNS RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

Cranford High School senior, Jack Goodwin, became an Eagle Scout on January 10, 2024. As his Eagle Project, Jack designed and built benches outside Livingston School that can be used as an outdoor classroom for the Music Dept.



# CRANFORD'S BOY SCOUT TROOP 80

*Submitted by Peter McDevitt*

Cranford's Boy Scout Troop 80 meets every Monday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Cranford Presbyterian Church.

For generations Cranford boys have gone through Troop 80's Scouting program as they have journeyed toward manhood and a life living the 12 points of the Scout Law. Scouts go on weekend camping trips, attend summer camps, participate in high adventure activities such as canoe treks and backcountry backpacking and seek to attain a wide universe of merit badges. For more information visit: [troop80cranfordnj.net](http://troop80cranfordnj.net).

Recent news Jack Goodwin and Owen Cuminsky recently earned the rank of "Eagle Scout" which is the highest rank a young person can reach in Scouting. In fact, only around 5% of all Scouts who join ever reach the Eagle rank.

# OWEN CUMISKEY BECOMES AN EAGLE SCOUT

Cranford High School senior, Owen Cumiskey, became an Eagle Scout on January 10, 2024. As his Eagle Project, Owen renovated the old concession stand at Memeorial Field into a rehab area for the school athletic department. Within the building, the floor, walls, and ceiling beams were repaired and repainted, and an air conditioning unit was installed.

Cranford's Boy Scout Troop 80 meets every Monday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Cranford Presbyterian Church.

For generations Cranford boys have gone through Troop 80's Scouting program as they have journeyed toward manhood and a life living the 12 points of the Scout Law. Scouts go on weekend camping trips, attend summer camps, participate in high adventure activities such as canoe treks and backcountry backpacking and seek to attain a wide universe of merit badges. For more information visit: [troop80cranfordnj.net](http://troop80cranfordnj.net)





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## CRANFORD EDUCATORS EARN TOP HONORS

### *Cranford Public Schools*

Michelle Petrow has been named the Governor's Teacher of the Year and Mary Markowski has been named the Educational Services Professional of the Year for Brookside Place School (BPS), as part of the 2023-2024 Governor's Teacher/Educational Services Professional Recognition Program.

"I feel humbled and honored to have been selected when I work in a building of truly outstanding educators," said Ms. Petrow.

Ms. Petrow has been teaching for 20 years, the last seven of those as a second grade teacher. "I love spending my day with children, each and every day is a new adventure," added Ms. Petrow, who started her career at BPS teaching second grade as a maternity leave replacement. She then was hired full time to teach kindergarten, going on to teach fourth grade for five years before switching back to second grade.

Ms. Petrow earned her undergraduate degree from Wagner College, and holds a special education degree.

"The best part of teaching is seeing a child's face light up when they achieve something that they have been struggling with," said Ms. Petrow.

She recently celebrated her 40th wedding anniversary, and has three children, two grandchildren Jordan and Genevieve, both born in 2023.

Mary Markowski has been named the Educational Services Professional of the Year for BPS.

"I love working in kindergarten because at this young age they are so eager to learn and you can see the difference from when they come in September and leave in June," said Ms. Markowski.

She has 23 years serving the students of BPS. Ms. Markowski started working in the school district as a way to balance career and home life. "As my children got older, I thought working in a school would be perfect so I could be off at the same time as them. I worked part time so I never missed anything they were involved in at their school," said Ms. Markowski, who is the proud mom of Matt and Chris, both grown, as well as her dog Brodie and cat Teddy.

The Governor's Educator of the Year program recognizes teachers and educational support staff who are exemplary professionals in their field. Recipients are nominated by their school communities.



(above, l-r) Mary Markowski, pictured and Michelle Petrow were named Educational Services Professional of the Year and Governor's Teacher of the Year for BPS, 2023-24, respectively.

Courtesy photo



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## THE FEBRUARY SPEAKERS PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMIT AREA OLD GUARD

The Summit Area Old Guard was founded in 1930 and meets most Tuesdays at the New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave. Our motto is "Come for the Programs. Stay for the Friends."

February speakers include Scott Hough, Ed Oatman or Amy Wagner, Dr. Yaron Moshel, and Amy Behr-Shields. Please join us. Our programs are free to the public, and we welcome you!

Our speaker on **Tuesday, February 6th** will be Scott Hough, Superintendent of Schools, Summit, NJ. Scott will give us an overview of the school system and describe the impact covid had and how he dealt with it (he was appointed to his position in June 2020!). Scott will also discuss critical issues facing all school administrators, such as bullying, security and student safety. Roughly one half of Summit's annual budget goes to support the public schools, and the appeal of Summit as a great place to live is supported by its excellent schools.

Our speaker on **Tuesday, February 13th** will be either the manager or deputy manager of Union County, NJ. Union County has a diverse population equivalent in size to that of Wyoming and a budget of a half billion dollars. Most people are quite familiar with their own city or town, but usually know much less about their county. Ed Oatman, manager, or Amy Wagner, deputy manager, will hopefully change that for you. County operations include areas such as law enforcement/courts, parks & recreation, public works -roads and infrastructure, health care, economic development, and a lot more.

On **Tuesday, February 20th**, Dr. Yaron Moshel, co-director of the Gerald J. Glasser Brain Tumor Center at Atlantic Health System's Overlook Medical Center, will be our speaker. He is one of a select few surgeons who specialize in removing deep-seated brain tumors using technology that includes computer-guided navigation, awake intraoperative brain mapping, endoscopy, and

microsurgery. Dr. Moshel will explain how the convergence of precision medicine, advanced robotics, and specialized imaging are fostering new breakthroughs in the treatment of brain and spine tumors.

Finally, on **Tuesday, February 27th**, we ask the question, 'with so much information accessible online, is a public library still relevant'? Amy Behr-Shields, the Director of the Summit Free Library, will explain how the library is needed to curate reliable sources of information, and to manage the complexities of digital and non-digital media, while serving as a community center and a welcoming environment. You will also be surprised to learn how many varied programs and services the library offers.

Past speakers and much more can be viewed at SummitOldGuard.org but we encourage people to drop in on our meetings which take place at the church at 10:00 a.m. most Tuesdays. "Come for the Speakers. Stay for the Friends."

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## CRANFORD POLICE RECOGNIZED FOR ONE MIND CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recently recognized the Cranford Police Department for achieving all requirements of the One Mind Campaign Pledge. This confirms the Cranford Police Department's commitment to the safety and well-being of all members of its community by training and certifying 100% of the agency's sworn officers in Mental Health and Special Needs Crisis Stabilization and at least 20% of sworn officers being training in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Currently, the Cranford Police Department has over 40 officers (75%) certified as CIT responders.

In a letter from IACP President Wade Carpenter, he recognized that "successful interactions between police officers and

persons affected by mental illness improves public trust, enhances officer safety, and saves lives."

Chief Ryan Greco noted the efforts of Captain Guy Patterson with Cranford Police Department's ongoing involvement in crisis intervention training, and especially for fostering partnerships with Union County CIT, Trinitas Hospital, and the ARRIVE Together Initiative. "Verification by the IACP that the Cranford Police Department meets their 'best practice' standards as part of the One Mind Campaign Pledge demonstrates our organization's commitment to enhanced training in de-escalation, crisis intervention, and mental health services for community members," Chief Greco said.

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The College Women's club of Cranford invites the community to a free entertaining program entitled: When there were Witches: An Exploration of the Salem Witch Trials.

On February 13th at 7:30 p.m., at the Jardine Academy located at 75 Rod Smith Place. Join us to hear guest speaker Mickey DiCamillo, from the Historical Society of Moorestown, discuss the events that happened in January 1692 which led up to what we know as the Salem Witch Trials.

The club offers free programming for the community as well as various fundraising events to support our mission which is to provide Cranford residents attending any high school with scholarships to fund their college endeavors. For more information about events and membership visit [collegewomensclubcranford.com](http://collegewomensclubcranford.com) or email [cranfordcollegeclub@gmail.com](mailto:cranfordcollegeclub@gmail.com).

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## One Mind Campaign Pledge

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# ELKS RECEIVE VETERANS WELCOME HOME KITS

Recently, twenty-five area Elks and volunteers helped to restock the shelves at the NJ State Elks Veterans Annex in Stirling. The items that were received will be assembled into Welcome Home Kits and delivered free of charge to previously homeless Veterans who are moving into a new residence.

Welcome Home Kits include a bed, night stand, dresser, sofa, dining table and chairs, lamps, bedding, linens, appliances, cleaning supplies, a shower curtain, mats, pots and pans, flatware, glassware, and more. All items are brand new.

Enough items to assemble 20 Welcome Home Kits were purchased by the NJ Elks East Central District, with Lodges in Cranford, Stirling, Summit, Springfield, Mountainside, Union, and Rahway, at a cost of approximately \$10,000 which was provided through grants, donations, and fundraising events.

The NJ State Elks National Veterans Service

Commission has helped over 2,300 veterans since 2016 and makes 25-30 deliveries each month throughout the state. The NJ State Veterans Annex was recently featured in "Givers of Hope" view on YouTube: [youtu.be/Qvndf\\_310Y4](https://youtu.be/Qvndf_310Y4)

Every night, as many as 40,000 veterans are sleeping on the streets. In partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission has pledged to help end veteran homelessness, and ensure that every veteran has the safe, stable home they deserve. In New Jersey, Elks volunteers provide direct service to over 1,000 veterans in multiple VA homes and connect with veterans and military members in their communities, providing them with services where they live.

Please email [njelksnvsc@gmail.com](mailto:njelksnvsc@gmail.com) to learn more about what NJ State Elks do to help veterans and visit [Elks.org](http://Elks.org) for more information about the Elks and how to join.





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(above) Area Elks and volunteers - Elks Care and Elks Share.

Courtesy photo

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# MEET TORPEDOMAN'S MATE 3RD CLASS EMIL F. FRANK, ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86

Written by Don Sweeney and Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault, Research by Don Sweeney, Barry Mazza and Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault. Military fact checking by Vic Bary

As the founder of the Cranford 86 project, I am often approached by residents who express their appreciation of the Hometown Hero banners that are displayed on lampposts throughout the streets of our town. Each serviceman's banner bears his birth and death year and hence, the comment that I hear most frequently is, "Oh my God, they were just kids". In the years preceding the inception of the Cranford 86 project, during the speeches given on each Memorial Day morning, it was this fact, among others, that would never fail to trigger my emotions, causing the hairs on my arm to stand at attention. It was a feeling so strong, that it drove me to take action to reintroduce these brave men to the new generations of Cranford residents, making sure that their faces and stories would never be forgotten. Of the forty-eight banners that have been presented so far, incredibly, twenty-five of these men were age twenty-one or younger when they died. They truly were just kids, as is the case with the hero whom I am about to introduce. Emil F. Frank was still a teenager when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and now it is his turn to have his story told.

### A YOUNG MAN WHO COULD LIGHT UP A ROOM

Possession of the servicemen's military portrait is what gives our team the green light to begin the research and writing which will memorialize his life. The portrait is the most coveted element of the entire process. In Emil Frank's case, a photo on file at the Cranford Historical Society was one of the best that we have discovered to date. Not only was it crisp and clear, but it was an image that seemed to show the genuine spirit of a nineteen year old that you would say "could light up a room". My two children were in their late teens themselves when I started the Cranford 86 journey and seeing pictures like this only deepened my empathy for the Gold Star families who were emotionally crushed, from the loss of such shining spirits from their lives.

For many of the Cranford 86 profiles that we have completed so far, we have been blessed to have made personal connections to family members or acquaintances of our Hometown Heroes. These are people who have either approached us on their own to initiate their loved one's story or others who we have located through our research. For the story of Emil Frank, we have made several attempts to contact Emil's nephew, Emil Long, with no response. Born in 1948, Emil Long is the son of Emil Frank's sister Florence, and we believe his last known address was in Florida. Being his uncle's namesake, we had high expectations of what this connection would bring and continue to hope that it occurs in the future. In the meantime, the discovery of a folder at the Cranford Historical Society has given our story a personal touch. In the folder was a beautifully crafted three-page letter, from the 1940's, handwritten in script. The letter seemed to be written by a family member and it detailed the life of Emil Frank. It is from these



(above) Apparently, signing a classmate's yearbook in the 40's was taken literally. We found the yearbooks of 2 classmates, CHS '40, both of which were signed by Emil. No one wrote long stories as is typical in modern yearbooks. Emil's quote maybe tells a little more about the man of whom we had little personal insight. "A bold onset is half the battle."

words that we learned about our brave young hero.

### JUST A GREAT CRANFORD KID

Emil was born on February 26th, 1923, to Emil and Louise Frank, a newlywed couple from neighboring Garwood. The young family moved to 426 Brookside Place in Cranford, when Emil Jr. was just months old. Our research has enlightened us to the fact that not every hero listed on the bronze plaques at Memorial Park was raised in Cranford. Nevertheless, each one is embraced and honored equally, but Emil Frank was a true hometown kid, living almost his whole life in Cranford and attending both grammar school and high school here. Early on, Emil Jr. was a baseball enthusiast involved in many after school activities. In Cranford High School he played freshman football, joined the Dramatic Society, Bowling Team, the Biology Club and the Golf Club. He was also a member of the band. After graduating with the class of 1940, Emil took employment in Bayonne as a machinist's helper. His sights were set on becoming an electrician, with plans to attend the Chicago Electrical School. As with most high school graduates of the later Great Depression years, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, changed many of the best laid plans. On January 31, 1942, just fifty-four days after the Day of Infamy, Emil enlisted in the U.S. Navy, leaving his job in Bayonne where he was now foreman. Emil attended basic training in Rhode Island and then advanced training for an additional sixteen weeks at Great Lakes Naval Station. He returned to Rhode Island for more advanced training at Torpedo School, in preparation to be a crew member on a destroyer. The attack on Pearl Harbor, triggered the U.S.

(Continued on page 12.)



(above) Torpedoman's Mate 3rd Class Emil F. Frank, USN, forever young. Of all the military portraits uncovered so far by the Cranford 86 team, this one of Emil Frank is the finest. With his spirit shining up from the paper on which it is printed, we all agreed that his is a face that lights up a room. When photographed here, Emil was 19 years old, if alive today, he would have been 100.



(above) During the years 1941-1945, the Cranford Citizen and Chronicle's reporting was largely devoted to news of the world war, especially anything referencing the sons and daughters of Cranford. Each week, its front page would announce any casualties and in many issues of the paper, sadly there were more than one. Here is the July 22, 1943, front page, reporting that two had died and one was missing. It's hard to even fathom how Cranford residents, along with the rest of America, felt during these difficult times.



# MEET TORPEDOMAN’S MATE 3RD CLASS EMIL F. FRANK (Continued from page 11)

Navy to rapidly rebuild their largely neglected collection of warships. Twenty-four new battleships, thirty-six new aircraft carriers and one hundred seventy-eight new destroyers as well as many other smaller vessels would be created rapidly, an amazing undertaking. The destroyers alone would need over 50,000 crew members. Not only were the ships filled, but they were overcrowded, an amazing American response to a call to action. An unofficial comparison that was had by a quick Wikipedia search noted that the Navy’s size from pre-December 7th, 1941 was at 337,349 sailors. At war’s end, it was an astonishing 3,793,429.

## TIN CAN SAILORS

Our 2022 tribute book tells a detailed account of Friend Burton, a young sailor from Cranford, who served on a destroyer. It was said that an assignment to a battleship or aircraft carrier with crews of 2000 would be compared to living in a large city, whereas an assignment to a destroyer with a crew size of less than 300 would be like living in a small town. Because of their thin steel skin, destroyers were given the nickname “Tin Cans” and their crew members were called “Tin Can Sailors”. The relatively light weight of the thin-skinned, nimble warship made it sit high in the water. Its draft, or depth in the water, was shallow, making it a difficult target for attacking torpedoes, but by the same token, it was a very easy kill when struck. Mortality rates of the Tin Can Sailor were higher than in any other Naval assignment.

For nearly every Cranford 86 profile created up to now, our research has given us an idea of the physical stature of our Hometown Hero.

Generally, military or school records provide us with a height and weight, but this was not the case for Emil Frank. The few photographs that were available to us, gave us the impression that as he was leaving high school, Emil was a relatively small young man. But from his military portrait, he had a larger persona, almost as if wearing his Navy uniform made him stand a little taller. One of his extracurricular activities at Cranford High School was membership in the Dramatic Society. It seemed to me that possibly the part he had chosen to play in the Navy was that of a torpedoman’s mate. He and his team were responsible for initiating the process whereby a 24 foot by 21 inch highly explosive metal projectile is hurled from a ship via compressed air, to the ocean’s surface. Then, with twin propellers providing thrust, it would travel under the waves at 25-40 knots up to 4,500 yards in hopes of sinking a German U-boat. It was a much larger role than any of his schoolmates might have imagined he’d be performing in the service of his country.

## ASSIGNMENT TO THE USS MADDOX

Torpedoman’s Mate Third Class Frank was assigned to the USS Maddox DD-622. The Maddox was a Gleaves-class destroyer, newly laid down from the Federal Ship Building’s docks in Kearny, N.J. on September 15, 1942. The ship’s first mission was in early April 1943, escorting fuel supply shipments from the Allied forces’ fuel depots in Aruba and Texas. Missions to North Africa and then to Ireland followed and it was reported that the USS Maddox received its first battle stars from enemy actions on one of those assignments. No battle details were

available to us, except to say that Emil Frank was injured in an encounter in foreign waters and was returned to a hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y. He was able to spend some precious time in Cranford as part of his recuperation, before rejoining his shipmates on the Maddox on May 24th, again headed to North Africa. Now, the Maddox was preparing to play an important role in the upcoming Battle of Sicily at Gela. At this time, Sicily was occupied by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany and this battle would be the opening engagement of the American portion of the Allied Invasion of Sicily. Code named Operation Husky, the invasion would be the largest amphibious assault in world history up to that point, with an armada of 3,200 attacking ships, and over 500,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen. It would be the first amphibious attack ever to use huge LCT tank transport ships.

The Seventh Army, under command of Lieutenant General George Patton was to lead the ground attack on Sicily after his success over Nazi General Rommel, the “Desert Fox”, in North Africa. Patton had taken over command in North Africa after the Allies were nearly beaten there. Eisenhower and Patton wanted to follow their successes in Africa with an attack across the English Channel but were overruled by British General Montgomery and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who were not yet convinced of the abilities of the newly arrived Americans. It would be by the success in Sicily that Eisenhower and the American Armed Forces would get the nod, giving them the lead role in the Normandy invasion.

(Continued on page 13.)



(above) Along with 3,094 other American Soldiers, Sailors and Marines, Torpedoman’s Mate 3C Emil Frank’s name is engraved, in white Carrara marble, on the Tablets of the Missing at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery. On the finely manicured property, are the graves of 7,800 brave souls, who gave their lives liberating Italy from fascism’s grip in WWII.



(above) USS Maddox DD-622, is a 348-foot, Gleaves-class destroyer. Note the two smokestacks. Gleaves-class destroyers were the first to be thrust by two separate engines, allowing it to survive a strike on one of its steam turbines. The Maddox was heavily armed with 10 or 15 torpedo tubes, 5 5 inch guns on revolving turrets, anti-aircraft guns and 2 depth charge tracks.



(above) The Junkers Ju-88 dive bomber was the most widely manufactured German bomber of WWII. Between 1936 and 1945, 15,000 were built. Nicknamed the Schnell bomber (fast bomber), it had a maximum speed of 230 mph. Battle reports tell us that on July 10, 1943, a Ju-88 dropped its four external bombs on the USS Maddox, sinking it in ninety seconds.



(above) Laid down in New Jersey at the Federal Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co. in Kearny, the USS Maddox DD-622 was Jersey born. Even though the last ship completed there was in 1945, the shipbuilding docks could still be seen in the 1970’s when driving past the area on U.S. Route 1 & 9.

# MEET TORPEDOMAN'S MATE 3RD CLASS EMIL F. FRANK (Continued from page 12)

## OPERATION HUSKY, THE BATTLE OF SICILY

As has become a custom of the Cranford 86 team, we like to explain the historic and strategic plans that surround the event in which our serviceman loses his life. This somewhat detailed explanation of Operation Husky explains the importance of the battle in which Emil Frank participated.

On July 5th, 1943, convoys protected by numerous U.S. and British destroyers left from Oran, Algeria on the northern coast of Africa. On July 9th a collection of Allied war ships named Task Force 81 sat in the Mediterranean Sea, some sixteen nautical miles off the Gela River, Sicily. Among them were thirteen military transport ships full of soldiers, two light cruisers, eight destroyers, including the USS Maddox. Several submarines, numerous LCI, LCT and LCS landing crafts as well as some salvage crafts. Task Force 81 was an impressive array of ships in itself, but it represented just a fragment of the staggering force of Operation Husky, which was staging for attack. There would be no pre-bombardment as would many times be the tactic in an operation such as this. The hope of a surprise attack was the intent. Not until 18:40 on July 9th was the convoy spotted by the Nazis. The Luftwaffe and Italian Air Forces released an all-out assault on the convoy, launching over 500 sorties to hamper any success by the soon-to-be attacking forces. The U.S. Army Air Force's 12th Air Support Command planned on providing air cover over Gela during daylight hours, but about 30 minutes before sunrise, at 04:21, the first Axis bombs were dropped. The USS Maddox was on torpedo watch on the outer perimeter of the task force's position. Thirty-seven minutes into the battle, a German Junkers Ju-88 dive bomber, on an attack dive aimed at the Maddox, dropped its 4 bombs. The first bomb hit the water behind the destroyer. The second two bombs struck the fantail-shaped back platform, causing an

enormous fireball, the fourth missed and landed in the water next to the ship. It is believed that the racks of depth charges on the fantail aft deck were struck by the second bombs, hence the huge fireball, causing catastrophic damage. USS Maddox DD-622 with a crew of 284, including our twenty-year-old Emil Frank, sunk in ninety seconds. A minesweeper, the USS Sentinel PC-621, was also sunk during the same attack. A huge tank landing craft LST-313 which was struck by bombs during the attack, was damaged badly, but made it to shore to unload its cargo of tanks before burning on the beach. The light cruiser USS Savannah shot down a Ju-88 at 05:14, not believed to be the same dive bomber that attacked the Maddox.

## WHERE WAS EMIL AT THIS FATEFUL MOMENT?

Without question, the most difficult part of what we do is to describe the events in which our Cranford hero loses his life. While relating the last moments of the USS Maddox, I asked myself, where was Emil in all of this? Based on previous Cranford 86 stories involving naval battles, we understand that every crew member has a daily job and also a battle station position. With his ship under fire, I envision Emil, in place, at the torpedo launchers, which were located on the deck at midship. With the crew size of a destroyer being relatively small, I imagined that no matter where he was, he was surrounded by friends and crewmates, men that he knew. Perhaps this thought provided a small amount of comfort to his family members when they heard of the tragic episodes of that fateful day.

Reading this battle story, I wanted to make sure that I knew the specifics about what distinguishes a dive bomber from other attacking bombers. Side research revealed that dive bomber sights its target as it descends to attack, like a suicide pilot. But unlike the Japanese kamikaze, in the Pacific battle theater, which crashes into its target using its plane as the bomb, a dive bomber

releases its bombs and then pulls out of its descent, letting the bomb load continue the course of the plane and strike the target. My naivety of many military terms is often commented on by readers in two ways. Some with advanced military knowledge will tell me that I over explain simple situations. Others, like me, who are still learning, thank me. A large part of our readership, we have found, are new followers of America's war history. They have indicated that terms mentioned casually in other battle stories, without definition, have left them wondering. We try to please all of our readers and always welcome your comments.

## THE FINE TUNING OF AN AMPHIBIOUS LANDING

The challenges experienced by Operation Husky on July 10th, 1943, began with gale force winds of thirty-five knots that created twelve foot seas, causing widespread seasickness and many navigational errors. The plan of a highly complex, full-fledged air attack was largely compromised due to weather. Only 200 of the 3,400 paratroopers reached their targets behind enemy lines, and gliders planned to place fighting units in strategic locations were not able to accurately land in the predetermined locations. One third to one half were believed to have landed in the Mediterranean. These conditions were similar and even worse than those experienced by attacking Allied troops at Normandy beaches, on the difficult morning of D-Day, which still lay eleven months ahead. What was learned from Operation Husky is believed to be responsible for the successes of D-Day, June 6, 1944. The course of World War II and world history was redirected from that day forward. The accomplishments of Generals Eisenhower and Patton in the 38-day Allied Invasion of Sicily proved the Americans to be worthy of the lead in the upcoming battles in the Mediterranean and ultimately the English

(Continued on page 14.)



(above) On destroyers like the Maddox, depth charges are located prominently, in racks, on the ship's fantail. When released, they roll into the water off the stern, then sink to explode upon submarines that are under the surface. The incident report for the tragic event that sunk the USS Maddox, told of a four bomb attack. Two of the four bombs struck the ship's fantail and exploded the depth charges, causing a huge fireball. This photo of the fantail back deck of a WWII destroyer, shows the volatility of these exposed, highly explosive barrels. The USS Maddox sunk in ninety seconds.



(above) The acronyms LCI, LCT and LCS are common in war stories which describe amphibious landings. We are extending our Cranford 86 "putting a face, to a name" slogan, to ID the 234 ton gorilla in the room. This LCI, or Landing Craft Infantry, is a much larger ship than the average reader might imagine. Each one, 158 feet in length, holds 200 fully geared soldiers. There were 923 LCI's manufactured during WWII.



(above) The LCT, Landing Craft Tank, was a British invention. It made its battle premiere at Operation Husky and changed the nature of the amphibious landing from that day forward. Each transport ship could carry six medium tanks and was armed with rocket launchers and two 4.7" guns for self-protection. An incredible 1,435 were manufactured in American shipyards during WWII. They were used extensively at Normandy after the successes at the Battle of Sicily.

MEET TORPEDOMAN’S MATE 3RD CLASS EMIL F. FRANK (Continued from page 13)

Channel at Normandy. See the online story at Cranford86.org for links to more details of the battle of Sicily.

OPERATION HUSKY, A SUCCESS?

Many historians say, even though smaller in scale, Operation Husky was more complex in its strategies than Operation Overlord on D-Day and was a success for the Allied forces. However, some critics state that the Allies lack of coordination of attacking air forces allowed the retreating Nazis to move 100,000 troops and 10,000 pieces of equipment out the Sicilian back door across the Strait of Messina to the mainland of Italy, a major strategic failure. The Nazi forces were in a vulnerable state and could have been completely eliminated there. Instead, the Allies would face them again in Anzio, at another amphibious landing attack that would happen in January 1944. Some even say that the Nazi strategists deserve credit for realizing that they were outmanned and destined to experience a great loss in Sicily. By retreating to fight another day they could have been considered the victor. Regardless of the conflicting opinions of history pundits on the topic of success or failure, all agree that Operation Husky served us well to prepare the Allies for the most pivotal event of WWII, which was yet to come at Normandy. Some WWII historians still consider Operation Husky to be the turning point in the war, with Sicily being the first piece of Nazi-occupied European land to fall to the Allied forces.

SHE WENT DOWN IN NINETY SECONDS

Immediately after the demise of the USS Maddox, a landing craft that witnessed the sinking in the darkness before dawn, reported that there were no survivors. However, seventy-four crew members were miraculously found afloat by a tugboat that witnessed the fireball from a distance. The incident reports claim they were afloat for 17 hours.. After persevering through the

perils of the attack and sinking of the Maddox, survivors then endured numerous strafing attacks from Italian Air Force and other Axis planes, as well the threat of the attacking predators in shark-infested waters. The USS Maddox, DD-622, received the unfortunate distinction of having been the fastest sinking U. S. warship to be lost in World War II. The ship’s commander, Lt. Commander Sarsfield, went down with the USS Maddox. He received the Navy Cross posthumously for his documented actions which saved the lives of many crew members during the ninety-second abandon ship operation. Second only to the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross is presented to marines or sailors for extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force.

Torpedoman’s Mate 3c Emil Frederick Frank Jr. was reported missing in action on July 10th, 1943. News of Emil’s status was reported on the front page of the July 22nd issue of the Citizen and Chronicle. The article read, “Parents Hopeful” stating that “Mr. and Mrs. Frank are looking forward to every mail delivery in the hope that it will bring them some word that their son has been rescued”. Emil’s family waited a full year in what must have been unimaginable anguish. Finally, Emil was reclassified as killed in action and lost at sea, and one wonders how this family could even begin to heal. Emil Frank’s name is engraved at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, on the Tablets of the Missing. His naval career was just a short eighteen months. In addition to the Purple Heart, he was honored with the American Defense Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the American Theater Campaign Medal, and the Expeditionary Medal (Navy). If Emil were alive today he would be one hundred years old.

The USS Maddox DD-622, now with two battle stars, was struck from the Navy’s list on

August 19, 1943, just 11 months after its launch, still with its first coat of gray paint. In October that year, the third USS Maddox was laid down, with new bow number DD-731. It went on to historic tours of duty in the remaining two years of WWII, and in the Korean and the Vietnam Wars.

Emil was survived by his father Emil F. Sr. and his mom Louise Frank, nee Hartman and two sisters Louise Frank Bohman and Florence Frank Long, all of Cranford.

Emil Frank was just a kid when he volunteered for a task, the enormity of which most of us cannot even grasp. As captured in the treasured image of his smiling face, he will remain forever young, but he became a grown man in every sense of the word. The Cranford 86 team will continue to search for a family member of Emil Frank. But, in the interim, he has a family here in Cranford. Everyone who takes the time to read about Emil’s sacrifice, or who gathers with us on Memorial Day morning, or who glances up at his banner in town and whispers his name, is Emil Frank’s family. If you carry gratitude in your heart for what Emil did for us, you can be his family too.

The banner of Torpedoman’s Mate 3rd Class Emil F. Frank was sponsored by Rosemarie D’Alessandris Boczon. Rosemarie is the niece of Augustine D’Alessandris, one of Cranford’s 86, also lost in WWII. After working closely with her in the telling of her uncle Augie’s story, Rosemarie was anxious to help us to continue our work and volunteered to sponsor a banner of an upcoming story. The cheerful military portrait of Emil caught her attention and made her hero selection an easy choice. Emil’s banner will be dedicated at Cranford’s Memorial Park on Riverside Drive and Springfield Avenue on Memorial Day morning, May 27th, 2024, following the parade.

The mission to introduce the 86 men whose names are on the honor roll in Cranford’s Memorial Park will continue, until we put a face and a story to every one of them. Currently, the files that we have for many of our servicemen are lacking photos and any personal information. In order for us to complete our work, we count on those who have knowledge of our Cranford heroes, to please come forward. See the list of our “Cranford Fallen Heroes” at Cranford 86.org to see which stories have been completed and which still need to be told. For more information about the Cranford 86 Project, email us at info@Cranford86.org.



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# DAR HELPS STIR UP A TEMPEST WITH A TEA BAG

Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter DAR



(above) Outstanding Junior Ashley Salsano (r.) pictured with DAR President General Pamela Wright at the 2023 Spring State Conference.

At the 128th Anniversary luncheon of Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) held in January, the chapter reported on their first U.S. Semiquincentennial observance.

Members celebrated the fact that some tea supplied by the chapter was used in the 250th anniversary re-enactment of the Boston Tea Party in December. The chapter contributed a limited edition King's Coronation Tea. "It seemed appropriate," said Chapter Treasurer Barbara Pollison-Beck who donated the tea.

During the luncheon, Ashley Salsano was honored as the chapter's Outstanding Junior member. Four new chapter members were officially welcomed and Beth Kavanaugh of Oldwick was sworn in. Women observing milestone membership anniversaries were also recognized: Carol DeFilippis, Warren, 55 years; Margaret Shilay, North Plainfield, 50 years; Catherine Strohmeyer, Watchung, 40 years;

Patricia Sullivan, Bridgewater, 10 years. Monthly meetings will resume on March 12 with a program on Betty Bradbury Vail and planning for a spring service project to clean and help preserve historic headstones in the area. Also on the agenda is the NJDAR State Conference in April.

The DAR is a nonprofit service organization open to women descended from an individual who aided the cause of independence during the American Revolution. New members are welcome. Contact the chapter at ESCchapterDAR@gmail.com.



(above) Tea donated by the DAR was used in the re-enactment of the Boston Tea Party in December.

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# TROOP 80 COMPLETES NYC HISTORIC HIKE

Cranford’s Boy Scout Troop 80 completed an 8 mile “Historic Hike” in downtown Manhattan on January 14th, 2024. The Scouts hiked through parts of Tribeca, the campus of NYU, Little Italy, Chinatown, and the Financial District, ending at Battery Park. Along the way, they stopped at over

40 historic buildings and locations, including the Freedom Tower, the 9/11 Museum, and Federal Hall, where George Washington was sworn in as 1st President of the United States in 1789. Troop 80 meets every Monday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Cranford Presbyterian Church.



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# CRANFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY ADULT EVENTS

224 Walnut Ave, Cranford, NJ 07016 • (908) 709-7272 • [www.cranfordlibrary.org](http://www.cranfordlibrary.org)  
Monday - Thursday: 10 AM - 9PM; Friday, Saturday: 10 AM - 5 PM; Sunday: closed

### Cookbook Club

**Monday, February 5, at 6 p.m.**

After the success of our December Cookie Swap, we are excited to start an on-going Cookbook Club! This month we are using the Smitten Kitchen cookbooks. Cookbooks are available to check out at the library.

### Movie Night

**Wednesday, February 7, at 7 p.m.**

Movies are back! Join us the first Wednesday of the month for a screening of a recently released DVD! Please visit our website or contact the library for film titles.

### Literary Cafe

**Saturday, February 10, at 10:15 a.m.**

Literary Café is a book chat program. The format is simple: Bring a few of your recent favorite books and tell the other members of the group what you like about them. If you don't have a copy of the book you want to talk about, that's okay, too. The books can be new or old, fiction or non-fiction, classic or contemporary. There is no required reading, and you will have the opportunity to learn about books recommended by other group members. Attend as many sessions as you'd like. Admission is free and all are welcome. Refreshments sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. Patrons are welcome to join us in person or online.

### International Film

**Monday, February 12, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.**

International films are back! Join us for an International film screening. The same film will be shown at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Please contact the library for the film title.

### Adults Create

**Tuesday, February 13, at 7 p.m.**

Join us the 2nd Tuesday of every month for crafts! Sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. Space is limited.

### Theater Project

**Saturday, February 17, at 2 p.m.**

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library invite everyone to attend a live theatrical performance -back in person! New Jersey's own Theater Project will present a reading of an original short play. The reading will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience, director, playwright and cast. Funds benefiting the Theater Project have been provided by the Union County LAP Grant and the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. No registration needed!

### Trivia Night

**Wednesday, February 21, at 7 p.m.**

Join us for another fun evening of trivia on Wednesday, January 10, at 7 p.m. This free event is hosted by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library! Join us in the Community Room on the first floor of the Community Center! Feel free to bring your own snacks and (non-alcoholic) drinks. Prizes awarded to the winning team. Please visit our website or contact the library to register.

### Readers Forum

**Monday, February 26, at 7 p.m.**

All are welcome at the Readers Forum Book Discussion Group. This month's book is The School for Good Mothers by Jessamine Chan.

### From Jazz to Soul Concert

**Tuesday, February 27, at 7 p.m.**

Songs from the 30s thru the 70s — A musical journey from the era when the "First Lady Of Song," Ella Fitzgerald graced the stage to when the "Queen of Soul," Aretha Franklin ruled the airways. In addition to Ella and Aretha, this showcase pays tribute to Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Nancy Wilson, Etta James, Martha & The Vandellas, Mary Wells, and Gladys Knight. Vocalist Rhonda Denet is accompanied by a trio of musicians in this performance.

# COLLEGE WOMEN'S CLUB OF CRANFORD

The club supports our Cranford youth and our amazing community through college scholarships, donations to project graduation, free programs open to all in our community and surrounding areas.

We are currently seeking new members. Come join us for light refreshments at any of our general meetings and Free open to the public program events.

See our website for membership information and program information and updates. [collegewomen'sclubcranford.com](http://collegewomen'sclubcranford.com) or email the club at [cranfordcollegeclub@gmail.com](mailto:cranfordcollegeclub@gmail.com)

Check out the line-up of programs and lectures for the year! All programs will be held at the Jardine Academy 75 Rod Smith Place Cranford.

**Program: When There Were Witches: An Exploration of the Salem Witch Trials Speaker: Mickey DiCamillo**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024 - 7:30 PM**

Mr. DiCamillo is a trustee at the Historical Society of Moorestown, research librarian and archivist.

**Program: Cranford Downtown Management Corporation – History, Events and On-Going Projects Speaker: Caren Demyen**

**Tuesday, March 12, 2024 - 7:30 PM**

Caren Demyen is currently the Executive Director for Downtown Cranford –Learn about the Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) yearly events, new businesses and more.

**Program: "The Beatles – From Liverpool to Abbey Road" Speaker: Vinnie Bruno**

**Tuesday, May 14, 2024 - 7:00 PM**

Beatles Scholar & 60s Rock Historian, <https://www.vinniebeatles.com/lectures>. This lecture will follow in the footsteps of The Beatles as they embark on their historic journey starting from their early days as a cover band in Liverpool and Hamburg, into the excitement of Beatlemania, Coming full circle, we will explore the highlights of each individual's post Beatles work.

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## NJ INTERGENERATIONAL ORCHESTRA WINTER FREE CONCERT - FEB 25

New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra (NJIO) will present its 2024 Winter Concert on Sunday, February 25th at 3 pm at Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, 716 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ. The concert is free and open to the public. Donations are gratefully accepted.

The concert will feature performances by three of NJIO's ensembles: Symphony Orchestra, Intermezzo Orchestra, and Prelude Ensemble. The Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Artistic Director Warren Cohen, will play Beethoven's Leonore Overture no. 1 and Mendelssohn's Symphony no. 5, composed when he was only 21 years old. Also known as the Reformation Symphony, it contains musical references to both the Dresden "Amen" and Martin Luther's chorale "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" (A Mighty Fortress is our God).

NJIO's Intermezzo Orchestra, conducted by Oliver Hagen, will perform excerpts from Beethoven's Symphony no. 5 and Symphony no. 2. The Prelude Ensemble, NJIO's entry-level group, is conducted by Elizabeth Maliszewski. Prelude will be performing La Rejouissance from Handel's Royal Fireworks Music and an arrangement of Beethoven's Greatest Hits!

In addition to playing in this beautiful performance space, this concert will be live-streamed and recorded.

### Concert Details:

Sunday, February 25th, 2024,  
at 3 pm

(doors open at 2:40 pm)

Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church  
716 Watchung Avenue  
Plainfield, NJ 07060

Admission is free; donations  
are gratefully accepted.



NJIO is committed to ensuring that its programs and concerts are accessible. For more information regarding the concert or to inquire about patron services, please contact NJIO at [info@njio.org](mailto:info@njio.org) or visit NJIO's website at [njio.org](http://njio.org)

New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra, now in its 30th season, has been nationally recognized as a leader in intergenerational excellence

through its unique approach to teaching musical performance and as a model for intergenerational orchestras across the country. Depending on space availability, NJIO welcomes new members of all ages and varying skill levels each concert period to one of its several orchestras – no auditions needed!

This concert is made possible by funds from: the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; The Lillian Schenck Foundation; The Henry S. and Agnes M. Truzack Foundation; a collective contribution made by the Citizens Philanthropic Foundation and the Investors Foundation; Standish Foundation; and many other generous supporters. NJIO is a proud participating organization in the Families First Discovery Pass Program, a program of the NJ Departments of Health and Human Services.

**Orchestra Concert Free Admission Sunday February 25, 2024 3 pm**

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# MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE

The traditional Martin Luther King Day of Service project sponsored by the Cranford Clergy Council and The Interfaith Human Relations Committee, was held on January 15, 2024, at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford. Generous neighbors dropped off hundreds of much needed items for those most vulnerable members of our communities. Items included hats, socks, gloves, diapers, wipes, health care items, feminine hygiene items, and food.

Donations were distributed to Cranford Family Care, Raphael's Life House, St. Joseph's Social Center, the YWCA Women's Shelter, El Centro Hispanoamericano and Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey (NJ Diaper Network). Janice Grievous hosted a craft program inside First Presbyterian where young people and their parents wrote thank you cards and made other items to give to armed service veterans.



(above) Volunteers who braved the cold to collect the donations outside First Presbyterian were: Cindy Hannen, Jean Wands, Phyllis Howard, Dan and Daniel McCloskey, George Gish and Skip Winter.

Courtesy photo

Please join Troop 83 in thanking our Veterans & First Responders at our 7th Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser Sunday, March 3, 2024 anytime between 8:00am - 12 noon Kenilworth VFW Hall 33 S.21st Street, Kenilworth Tickets are \$ 8.00 per person Veterans, First Responders & children under 5 eat FREE Buy tickets at: <http://njtroop83.square.site> or email: [troop83mom@gmail.com](mailto:troop83mom@gmail.com)

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# HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Happy New Year! The 2024 membership campaign for the Cranford Historical Society is underway. The Cranford Historical Society is a non-profit educational organization whose mission since 1927 has been to preserve and perpetuate the history of Cranford. We maintain the Crane-Phillips House Museum, open to the public every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, and its beautiful gardens. We host free community outreach programs and events for visitors of all ages. We maintain the Hanson House, where our office is located, and we assist a steady stream of people researching their homes or looking for information about local history. We also publish five newsletters each year for our members. "The Mill Wheel" contains society news and interesting articles on local history. Membership supports the continuation of our archives, costume department, building maintenance, our programming, and our History Scholarship which is awarded to a Cranford High School graduate every year. We thank all our current members for their loyalty and hope to meet some new members this year. Please join us!

For more info about joining the Cranford Historical Society, please call our office at 908-276-0082 or e-mail us at [cranfordhistoricalsociety@verizon.net](mailto:cranfordhistoricalsociety@verizon.net). A 2024 Membership Form can be found on the Society's website at [cranfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://cranfordhistoricalsociety.org). Or complete the following form and return with your check to: Cranford Historical Society, 38 Springfield Ave. Cranford, NJ 07016

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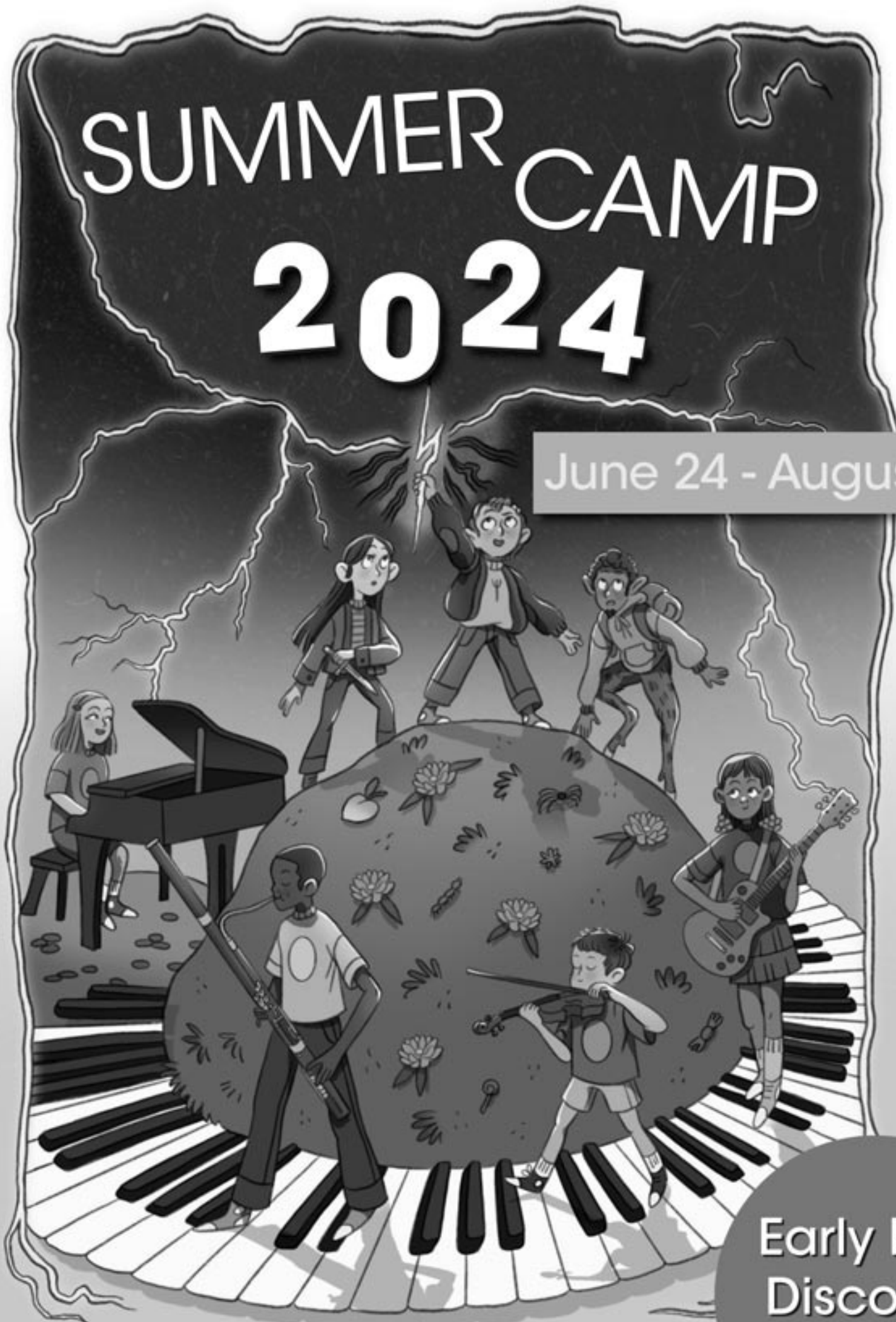
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