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A PHONE CALL CAN SAVE A VETERAN'S LIFE

Michael D. Boll, President, NJVN

Every year we honor the fallen, who have sacrificed their lives so we can live in the best country in the world. Please reflect on the service our heroes perform to keep us safe and protect our way of life. This Memorial Day we are asking people to call and check on our active duty soldiers and veterans that have served. Every day we lose twenty-two veterans to suicide and 40 percent of veterans that return from combat are diagnosed with PTSD. Unfortunately, this number has not changed much, and we feel that recreational therapy and peer support can really make a difference for our veterans living in crisis. The New Jersey Veterans Network (NJVN) is fully committed to combat this epidemic by aggressively seeking out veterans in need. Our goal is to contact the veteran before they fall into a deep state of depression and provide them lifesaving and lifechanging resources.

Over the last few years, the NJVN has been able to provide thousands of meals to our veterans and active duty soldiers. Thousands of veterans were given new suits and clothing from our storage area, over thirty newly refurbished

automobiles were gifted to disabled veterans, and the most important thing the NJVN does is save lives through our peer support /mentorship program.

The NJVN works from the heart and is therefore able to work with all the other amazing veteran charities that share the same common goal, putting veterans first. Our donations go directly to the veteran's programs, which allows us to assist veterans and their families throughout the entire state and host numerous recreational therapy activities as well. This year we are starting up a few veterans' retreats and will focus on increasing events at our state veteran hospitals and shelters.

We are always looking for volunteers that can both assist with upcoming events and help mentor veterans so they can live better productive lives. Volunteers are the most important NJVN resource, and we would love to have more people help us save lives. If you need assistance or are interested in joining the team, please send us your name, email, and phone number to NJVN1775@gmail.com or call 973-332-1556. Check out our website NJVN.org for our services and accomplishments.

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(above) New Jersey Veterans Network veterans and volunteers at a recent event.

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REGISTER FOR RELAY FOR LIFE OF RAHWAY

More than just a walk, the American Cancer Society Relay For Life brings together passionate supporters who embody the American Cancer Society's vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. This volunteer-led experience unites communities to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones lost to cancer, and raise funds to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

Please join us for our biggest event of the year, and bring the whole family, on Saturday, June 8th at the Rahway River Park Stadium, Rahway, NJ, from 2:00 to 10:00 p.m. (check in begins at 1:30). During the course of the day, we will celebrate cancer survivors and caregivers; there will be an array of children's activities; healthcare, fitness, and wellness personnel with educational materials; music, entertainment, fun, and food trucks! At sunset, there is a very moving, candlelight luminaria ceremony to honor and remember loved ones who have lost their fight against cancer.

Visit relayforlife.org/rahwaynj to register today and join your community in the fight against cancer. If you cannot attend this event, please go to our website to find information regarding cancer prevention, support and services for patients and families, ways to get involved,

future events, or to make a tax-deductible donation.

Relayers celebrate the wins we have accomplished, own the impact our dollars are making, and champion the future for everyone. Sadly, in 2024, it is predicted that there will be over 2 million new cancer cases diagnosed, and over 600,000 cancer deaths in the US. Cancer deaths have declined dramatically in the last 30 years due to early detection, a decrease in smoking, and much improved treatment options. These are just some of the things the contributions of relayers have funded. Together we have made a huge impact!

Cancer has touched us all. This is our chance to fight back! Every cancer, every life.





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- Filets of fresh tomatoes and basil with a touch of cream
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- Prosciutto, onions, garlic, and basil in tomato sauce

THIRD COURSE

(Choose one)

- *Pan Seared Breast of Chicken* -
- Your choice of style:
- Francaise, Marsala, Piccata, Parmesan
- *Eggplant Rollatini* -
- Filled with ricotta and mozzarella cheese over linguine
- *Pan Roasted Skin-On North Atlantic Salmon*
- Accompanied by fingerling potatoes and spinach in a citrus sauce
- *Grilled Flat Iron Steak Teriyaki* -
- Served with whipped potatoes and grilled asparagus

Fourth Course

(Choose one)

- *Cheesecake* - *Tiramisu* -
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RAHWAY ELKS INSTALLS OFFICERS FOR 2024-25

Rahway Elks Lodge #1075 held its Installation of Officers for the 2024-25 year on March 23, 2024.

This year's officers are Exalted Ruler Lawrence Mastroberardino PER, Esteemed Leading Knight Kristina Petti, Esteemed Lecturing Knight Mary Ellen Paxton, Esteemed Loyal Knight Robert Temple, 1-Year Trustee Jonathan Joshua PER, 2-Year Trustee Paul Kozakiewicz PDD, 3-Year Trustee Raymond Moceikis, 4-Year Trustee Nelson Matias, 5-Year Trustee John Daniel, Treasurer Doreen Duffy PDD, Secretary Kelly Mazza, Esquire Brian Gray, Chaplain Britton dePaolo, Tiler Jeffrey Jack, and Inner Guard Jeffrey Pflug.

The ceremony was presided over by NJ Elks Past State President Rick Gathen who was

joined by District Deputy Dan Kretchmer and District Vice President Hank Bedlivy, and was followed by a luncheon to celebrate the new slate of officers.


The Rahway Elks contribute to our community by supporting veterans and children

with special needs. They provide grants to local organizations, award scholarships, sponsor events, and host youth activity, peer leadership and drug awareness programs. Please visit elks.org for more information about the Elks and how to join.



(above) Installation of Officers for the 2024-25

Courtesy photo



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PANCAKE BREAKFAST MAY 19, 2024

Come to a Pancake Breakfast, hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary - Unit 102, on Sunday, May 19, 2024 at the American Legion Post 102, located at 112 West Elizabeth Ave., from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. This month's special is Taylor Ham. Donations: Adults \$8.00 / Seniors & Children \$7.00 / Ages 5 & Under Free. Take outs are available.

This event is open to the public, so come out and enjoy a home cooked breakfast, and support our veterans!



FLOWER BOUQUET TEACHES BENEFITS OF RECYCLING

Rahway Public Schools

Madison School in Rahway hosted a program called Project Heart. It taught about the benefits of Recycling in art class and students created a recycled art project. Using recycled materials

(egg cartons, paper towel rolls, buttons) students in Mrs. Gould's art class were able to create a flower bouquet. The students took the bouquet home to give it to someone they loved.



Photo by Rahway Public Schools

ARE YOU READY TO BEAT THE HEAT? DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT'S TOO HOT.

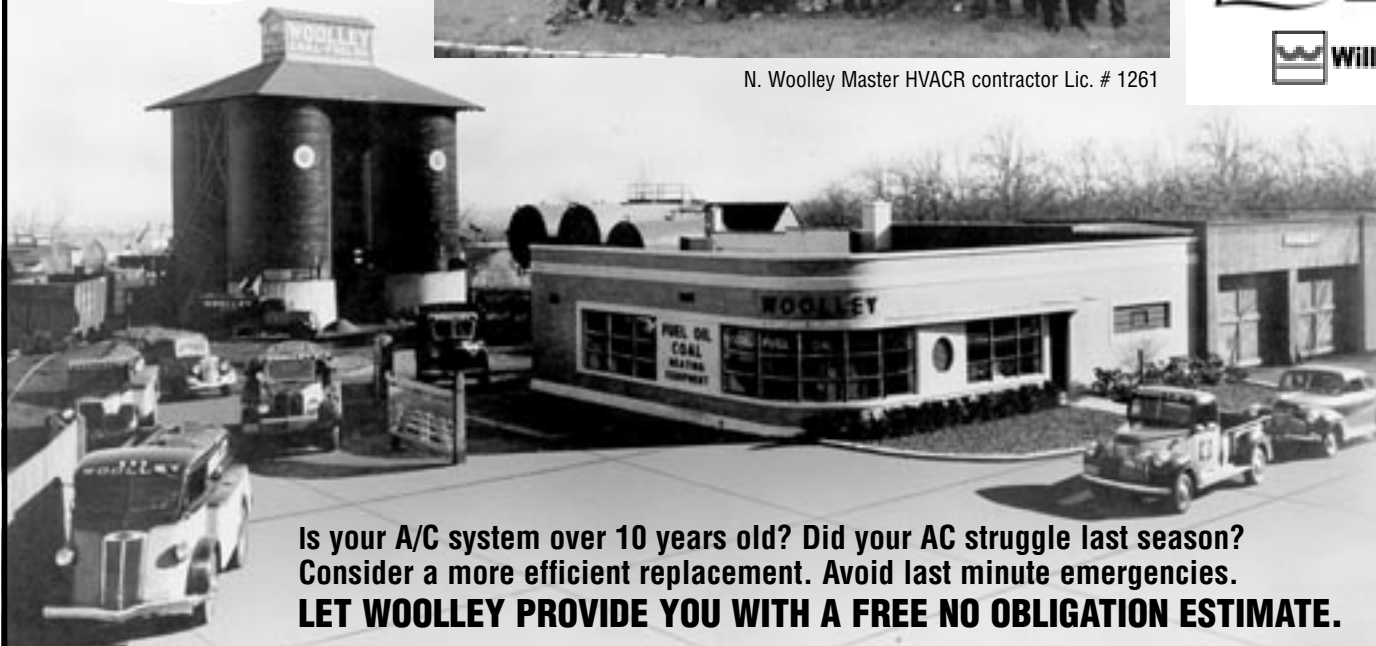
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PRESCHOOLERS CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY

By Lauren Battiato & Tiffany Cykowski

Rahway Academy preschoolers embarked on a vibrant journey through Black history, exploring the contributions of authors, inventors, musicians, and more through a captivating gallery filled with student-created artifacts.

The gallery showcases the culmination of hands-on learning experiences that ignited

curious minds. Inspired by the sounds of Louis Armstrong and H.E.R., students transformed recycled materials into their own unique instruments, filling the preschool with joyful melodies. They dug into mathematics and fine motor skills by learning about George Crum, the inventor of the potato chip, and voting for their favorite flavor - their data cleverly displayed on a charming chart.

But the adventures didn't stop there! Little learners blasted off into space with rockets crafted from recycled materials, fueled by the inspiring story of Mae Among the Stars by Roda Ahmed. Throughout the week, the magic of storytelling unfolded as seventh and eighth-grade mystery readers enthralled the preschoolers with

captivating tales about Black history icons and related topics.

The dedication and creativity of the preschool teachers and paras shine through in every corner of the gallery, making it a true testament to their passion for early childhood education. The culmination of this month-long exploration was a family event held on Friday evening, February 23rd, where the students and their families were invited to witness the preschoolers' fantastic creations firsthand. The families enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate Black history, creativity, and the boundless potential of young minds!

Thank you to those who came and joined the fun and became inspired by the future generation of changemakers!



Photo by Rahway Public Schools

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KINDERGARTENERS GET A CLUCK-ING GOOD LESSON



Photo by Cara Scott

Submitted by Dyan McMillen

Grover Cleveland Elementary School kindergartener's curiosity about chickens was hatched thanks to a special visit from Quiver Farms in Pennsylvania.

Farmer Joe brought a live hen and a basket of eggs, giving students a firsthand look at these fascinating farmyard creatures. The children learned all about the lifecycle of a chicken, from the egg to the clucking hen.

Farmer Joe even brought along a rooster, explaining how these watchful birds use their loud crows to alert the hens and chicks of any approaching danger. The kindergartners were wide-eyed as they observed the rooster's impressive crow.


But the learning didn't stop there! Farmer Joe also introduced the concept of incubation, using

a special incubator he brought along. He explained that while a mama hen naturally keeps her eggs warm with her body heat, an incubator can do the same job, allowing us to hatch chicks even without a hen present.


"This visit was a wonderful way for our students to connect with agriculture and gain a deeper understanding of where their food comes from," said Ms. Scott, a Kindergarten teacher at Grover Cleveland Elementary School. "Seeing a live hen and rooster, along with the incubator, brought the science of chickens to life for our young learners."

The visit concluded with the kindergartners asking Farmer Joe many enthusiastic questions about chickens, their care, and the exciting prospect of witnessing the eggs hatch in the incubator.

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BARRY HENDERSON OBITUARY



(above) Retired Rahway Chief of Police Barry Henderson

Retired Rahway Chief of Police Barry Henderson passed away on April 2, 2024 at the age of 83.

Chief Henderson was born in Rahway on March 24, 1941. He was a standout athlete at Rahway High School (1959) in basketball and baseball; attaining All-American honors in baseball.

After a brief time in the Detroit Tigers minor league system, Henderson returned home due to a career ending injury.

Henderson joined the Rahway Police Department in 1964. Following the 1960 riots, he headed the juvenile community relations bureau.

From that point on, he rose through the ranks and was promoted to Chief in 1988. As chief, he made innovations in community policing, technology, training and recruitment.

Henderson retired on April 1, 1998. He then took the position of Director at Rahway Department of Public Works. He worked 11 years in that capacity before retiring. In total, he dedicated 47 years of public service to the City of Rahway.

He was a two-time recipient of the valor award from the 200 Club, a member of the Honor Legion, Union County Police Chiefs Association (President 1993; 1997), received a citizenship award from the American Legion, and was inducted into the Union County Baseball Hall of Fame (1988).

Henderson received the New Jersey State Police Chiefs Association Humanitarian Award in 1997 and the New Jersey State PBA Lifetime

Membership Award (Silver in 1984 and Gold in 1987).

Outside of his career in law enforcement, Henderson served for ten years on the Rahway Board of Education. He was lifetime member of the Rahway Elks BPOE 1075, a member of the Rahway Yacht Club, and Deutscher Club of Clark.

His love of sports stayed with him throughout his life, as he was a huge fan of the Yankees, Cowboys, Alabama football, and Duke basketball. He was an avid reader who enjoyed history and biographies. Barry enjoyed classic movies with Casablanca as his favorite.

He is predeceased by his parents Robert and Ann Henderson, his brothers Fred and Bruce, his wife Rose, his daughter Ann Hardoby, and his son Barry, Jr.

He is survived by his son Edward and his wife Jennifer, his grandsons Shane and Brody, grandson Nicholas, granddaughter Ann Marie O'Grady (née Hardoby), great grandson Jack, great granddaughter Elizabeth and great granddaughter Ada O'Grady, brother Robert, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held to honor Chief Henderson on April 11, 2024 in front of Rahway City Hall, with Police Honors. "Chief Henderson will be remembered with admiration, respect, and gratitude. We thank him and the Henderson family for his lifetime of service to the Rahway community," said Police Director Nicholas Breiner. "We are forever indebted to his contributions and the path he paved for future generations in law enforcement."

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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

MATHAIR SEANMHATHAIR, MUTTER, GROBMUTTER, MATKA, BABCIA, MAE, AVO, MADRE, ABUELA, MERE, GRAND MERE, MATER, MA MOM MOMMA GRANDMA, GRAMS BABA. NO MATTER THE LANGUAGE, TRANSLATED IT'S THE SAME FOR US ALL, HAPPY MOTHERS DAY TO OUR MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS.

WHETHER MOMS, GRANDMOMS OR WIVES AND, YES, MOM IN LAWS, IT'S TIME TO FLOWER THEM, CHERISH THEM, HELP THEM, TREAT THEM WITH RESPECT. JUST PLAIN LOVE THEM TIGHT AND IF UNFORTUNATELY REMEMBERING THEM WITH A VISIT, FLOWERS AND A PRAYER AT ST. GERTRUDES. I SAY HELLO AS OFTEN AS I CAN TO THE LIVING. BRING THEM CANDY, FLOWERS, CLOTHING AND, YES, EVEN POSSIBLY A NEW HOME...WE CAN HELP MOM OR GRANDMA RELOCATE, AND LIKELY DOWNSIZE, GET AN EASY CARE CONDO OR STYLISH APARTMENT. NOW THAT COULD BE A GREAT MOTHERS DAY GIFT!

THIS YEAR LET'S REMEMBER AND KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ALL THE UKRAINIAN MOTHERS, MATN AND GRANDMOTHERS BABYCR SUFFERING AND STRESSED TRYING TO SURVIVE WHILE PROTECTING THEIR CHILDREN AND OR GRANDCHILDREN FROM THE TERROR OF WAR. THERE ARE SOME GOOD CHARITIES SUPPORTING THEM. PLEASE DONATE. HAPPY MOTHERS DAY TO ALL MOMS AND GRAND MOMS, MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU. REMEMBER EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS ARE VALUABLE IN REAL ESTATE.

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EXHIBIT “BETWEEN EXTREMES”

City of Rahway

Mayor Raymond Giacobbe and the Rahway City Council present a Gallery Space Pop-Up program, *Between Extremes: An Exhibit of Black & White Artworks*. The exhibit will run from May 5 to May 31, 2024, at The Rahway Senior Center at 1306 Esterbrook Avenue in Rahway, NJ. The grand opening reception will take place Sunday, May 5th from 1:00-4:00 p.m. and admission is free to the public.

This exhibit will coincide with NJ Arts & Music Express, a collaborative arts program presented by Rahway, Avenel, and Woodbridge NJ. As part of the event, there will be a preview exhibit opening on Saturday, May 4th from 12:00-3:00 p.m.

The inspiration for the event speaks to the long history of civilization’s reliance on black and white contrast. Since ancient times, early drawings utilized charcoal or black ink. Many prints use just black ink and allow the white of the paper upon which the print is transferred to serve as ‘lights’ of white. In turn, humanity experienced black and white photography well before the advent of color photography. As such, this exhibit seeks to highlight the depth, simplicity, and history of black and white art forms.

“Color is one of the main means through which artists create artwork. Yet a great deal of artwork, both traditional and contemporary is created using only black and white pigments,” said Rahway Assistant Administrator of Cultural and Heritage Affairs Lawrence Cappiello. “The reduction of elements in artwork to simple black and white often produces works of graphic power, simplicity, austerity, and a feeling of timelessness.”

The exhibit will include linocuts, etchings, traditional and non-traditional drawings, alternative materials, and photography. Featured artists include Jacki Dickert, Gary Godbee, Kayt Hester, Tenjin Ikeda, Patti Jordan, Cintia Malhotra, Len Merlo, and Jay Seldin.

There will be regular gallery hours during exhibit dates from Monday through Friday between 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Jacki Dickert is a local photographer. Although she primarily works with color, she will feature black and white photographs, such as nighttime scenes, that use deep blacks and strong bright whites to create impact and drama.

Gary Godbee is a Union County painter who primarily creates stunning landscapes showing an immense sense of depth. His drawings tend to be

portrait studies employing charcoal and white chalk on toned papers.

Kayt Hester produces detailed pictures using torn pieces of black tape.

Tenjin Ikeda is a printmaker whose linoleum cut prints are filled with precise textures, tones, and design elements.

Patti Jordan creates drawings using ink that she squeegees across her paper using a ruler to produce unique abstractions of black and white.

Cintia Malhotra teaches graphic design but often utilizes photography in her personal artwork. She focuses on shadows and overlay of images to create mysterious images in black and white.

Len Merlo is a maker of a variety of prints including etchings, monoprints, and linocuts. He often uses non-toxic printmaking techniques which he teaches classes at New Jersey’s Frontline Arts.

Jay Seldin is a notable New Jersey photographer whose black and white prints are of sights he has encountered all around the U.S. and other countries.

For information on the Gallery Space, please contact Lawrence Cappiello: at lcappiello@cityofrahway.com or call (732) 669-3600.

RAHWAY ARTIST SELECTED FOR NEWARK TERMINAL A EXHIBIT



(above) “Michael” by Festina Amaturu

Rahway artist Festina Amaturu work was selected out of thousands to be displayed throughout 2024 at Newark Airport's Terminal A through a program led by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey recently announced the activation of 20 new digital artworks by local artists now on display throughout Newark Liberty International Airport’s award-winning Terminal A in the first rotation of new artwork added to digital screens since the terminal opened a year ago. Digital artwork at the terminal is refreshed annually to highlight local art through a program led by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

and to prioritize the New Jersey sense of place that is distinct to the aesthetic and design of Terminal A.

The artworks by 20 artists were selected after a 6-month process initiated via outreach by the EWR Terminal A Art Advisory Council, comprising members of the statewide arts community. The council made recommendations based primarily on the artwork, the artist’s roots to the New York/New Jersey region, and connection to the airport’s host communities of Newark and Elizabeth. The Port Authority and the operator of Terminal A, Munich Airport NJ, selected the artworks based on the council’s recommendations.

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GEN. ALFRED M. GRAY (1928-2024), WAS HIGHEST RANKING MARINE

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

During a career lasting 41 years, retired Marine Corps General Alfred M. Gray Jr. reached the rank of four star general and became the 29th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, the highest position in the Corps. Enlisting in 1950, General Gray worked through the ranks and is the only soldier to go from “buck private” to Commandant. The general, whose roots were in Rahway and who would return several times to visit his hometown, passed on March 20, 2024.

The Gray family came to Rahway in 1925 and moved into one of the Bryant Street row houses near Veterans Field. It’s possible the move to Rahway was made so Alfred Sr., a conductor employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad, could be near the main line. Alfred Jr. was born in 1928, and the family would spend the next 16 years in Rahway. Al, as he was called by his family and classmates received his elementary education in St. Mary’s and attended Rahway High through his sophomore year before the family moved to Point Pleasant Beach. A three-sport athlete at Point Pleasant Beach High, he graduated with the Class of 1946. After high school, he entered Lafayette College but left in his junior year due to “financial reasons.” When the Korean War broke out, Al enlisted in the Marines, starting him on a path that would define his life.

Upon enlisting, the recruit served with the Fleet Marine Force in the Pacific aboard the submarine USS Perch engaged in amphibious reconnaissance. The young Marine must have exhibited special qualities as he quickly attained the rank of sergeant, and by April 1952, was commissioned a second lieutenant. His two-year tour in Korea concluded with service with the 11th, 7th, and 1st Marine Divisions.



(above) General Gray was well known as being the first commandant to have his official portrait taken in a camouflage utility uniform as a reminder that in the general's words, "Every Marine is first and foremost a rifleman."



(above) On April 12, 1997, several hundred people gathered at the corner of St. Georges Avenue and Grand Avenue to meet General Gray and honor him by renaming a portion of St. Georges “General Al Gray Boulevard.”

Back home, Gray continued to rise in the ranks, holding positions of responsibility in Camp Lejeune, Guantanamo Bay, and Marine Corps Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

By the time the Vietnam War broke out, he had reached the rank of major. While serving parts of eight years in the war-torn country, he was awarded the Silver Star for his “inspiring courage, bold initiative, and selfless devotion to duty” after saving fellow Marines who had wandered into an enemy minefield on the night of May 14, 1967. He was also awarded the Bronze Star (4) and the Purple Heart (3) for his heroic action. In the closing year of the war, he planned the 1975 evacuation of Cambodia and served as commander of ground forces during the evacuation of Saigon where he helped more than 7,000 people leave the capital city.

Gray was promoted to brigadier general in March 1976 and became major general in February 1980 when he was given the command of the Marine Division, FMF, Atlantic, at Camp Lejeune. In August 1984 he was promoted to lieutenant general and within three years rose to the rank of general. On July 1, 1987, he received his appointment to become the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

As Commandant, General Gray had a vision of how the Marine Corps could move forward and presided over significant changes that have endured to this day. He created the Marine Corps Combat Development Command and established the Marine Corps University at Quantico which oversees professional military education. He also pressed for the commissioning of “Warfighting,” a doctrine that shifted the Corps from traditional training and concepts to a more innovative style. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff he served as an advisor to both Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.

General Gray was honored by Rahway on

several occasions. On May 28, 1989, the general served as the Grand Marshall of Rahway’s annual Memorial Day Parade. In his remarks following the parade, the general stated, “I’ve never been far from this great city. The City of Rahway has always remembered its fallen veterans and we dedicate today to them, that their lives were not shed in vain.” He concluded his address on a personal note saying that he was looking forward to spending time with his old Rahway friends and neighbors.

Eight years later, on April 12, 1997, several hundred people gathered at the corner of St. Georges Avenue and Grand Avenue to meet General Gray and honor him by renaming a portion of St. Georges “General Al Gray Boulevard.” Included in the throng of people were city officials, members of VFW Post 681 and American Legion Posts 5 and 499 and representatives of other posts from neighboring cities. General Gray commented, “The renaming came as a pleasant surprise. I never had something like this. It’s a great honor.”

Another tribute came in 2019 when General Gray was inducted into “Rahway’s Own” the city’s program that spotlights those from the community who have achieved excellence in their field and have been a credit to the city. At the induction ceremony held in the Rahway High School auditorium, the general presented standards to live by and thoughts on becoming successful individuals. He told the students, “Anybody can be ready to get on a ship or on an airplane. It’s a matter of if you’re prepared to win or be successful. That takes study and thought and requires thinking and learning over a long period of time. That’s how you get better.”

General Gray passed peacefully in his home in Alexandria, Va. at the age of 95. He was predeceased by his wife Jan, his partner of forty years.

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The Gateway Family YMCA

With recently published research indicating blood pressure control has worsened in both men and women since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Gateway Family YMCA urges community members to make their health a priority by getting a blood pressure screening. Blood pressure guidelines from the American Heart Association indicate that nearly half of all Americans (46 percent) have high blood pressure. High blood pressure is often referred to as “The Silent Killer” because there are typically no warning signs or symptoms.

While high blood pressure and heart disease are serious conditions, the good news is a healthy heart is an achievable goal through lifestyle changes such as regularly monitoring your own blood pressure, lowering sodium intake, eating healthier, and getting more physical activity. Getting help can be as easy as contacting the Y and taking part in a free community chronic disease management program.

“While there are many ways to keep your heart healthy, making a conscious effort to tackle your blood pressure and decrease sodium intake are two quick, effective ways to prevent heart disease,” said Melynda A. Disla, President/CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. “No matter what your heart health goal is this year, the Y has a variety of resources to help you get started and achieve them.”

The Gateway Family YMCA offers the YMCA’s Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program that helps adults with hypertension lower and better manage their blood pressure. The program focuses on regular monitoring of

one’s blood pressure at home using proper measuring techniques, individualized support and nutrition education to potentially reduce blood pressure and improve their quality of life.

Research shows that the simple process of checking and recording your blood pressure at least twice a month over a four-month period, along with regular physical activity, proper nutrition and reducing sodium intake, may lower blood pressure in people with high blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring programs are available in Elizabeth, Rahway and Union – at both YMCA Branches and in the local community through community groups, senior centers and local library collaborations. The program is available in both English and Spanish. Nationally, the YMCA’s Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program is available at more than 700 locations in 71 states.

In addition, The Gateway Family YMCA is continuing its increased availability of the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program – which is part of the CDC-led National Diabetes Prevention Program. The YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program helps adults at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles to help reduce their chances of developing the disease. Type 2 diabetes is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease and people with diabetes are twice as likely to have heart disease or suffer a stroke as those who do not have it.

The program provides a supportive environment where participants work together in a small group to learn about eating healthier,

increasing their physical activity and making other behavior changes with the goal of reducing body weight by 7 percent in order to reduce their risk for developing diabetes. A trained Lifestyle Coach leads the program over a 12-month period. Increased physical activity and moderate weight loss not only reduce diabetes risk, but also have an impact on lowering blood pressure and cholesterol.

In addition to monitoring your blood pressure, reducing sodium intake is a great way to keep your heart healthy. Per the American Heart Association (AHA), too much sodium in your system puts an extra burden on your heart and blood vessels. In some people, this may lead to or raise high blood pressure. Everyone, including kids, should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day (about 1 teaspoon of salt). Having less sodium in your diet may help you lower or avoid high blood pressure.

The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers dedicated to strengthening community through Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. The Gateway Family YMCA impacts the community by providing quality services for all. The Y doesn’t just strengthen bodies – it strengthens people, families, and communities.

The Gateway Family YMCA offers a community of diverse individuals who can support all people in meeting their health and well-being goals. Learn more by visiting tgfymca.org or stopping into your local branch in Elizabeth, Rahway or Union, NJ.



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ROOT SYSTEMS

In recent years we have experienced multi heat waves during the summer, making it difficult for newly planted trees and other plants to get enough water from the ground up into the roots, so the tree can transport it up to the leaves. At these times of high stress for trees and other plants we can help by making sure they have enough water to make it through the summer, into autumn.

ROOT SYSTEMS

When we purchase a plant in a garden center we try to choose the healthiest one we can find and ponder its potential without considering its most essential component, the root system. When a seed germinates and begins its life journey, the first part to sprout is a tiny root.

Unlike in nature where the roots have plenty of space to spread out, plants in containers have little area and the roots grow into themselves becoming entwined together. This problem is known as 'root-bound'. The root-ball will not be able to grow outward in search of water and nutrients and will slowly choke itself.

ALWAYS BREAK THE ROOT BALL

The solution to this problem is simple, break open the root ball. This technique can be intimidating to people who don't want to harm the plants they just purchased. You will do far more damage over time by leaving the roots as they are.

The bound roots will stunt the growth of trees, vegetables and flowers. Less water means lower productivity or simply put smaller tomatoes. Trees, shrubs and bushes will eventually show damage of dying twigs and branches.

Breaking the root ball can be done quickly, especially in smaller plants such as annuals of vegetables or flowers grown in cell packs. When you lift the plant out of the pack pull the lower roots apart, actually breaking them so they will spread out when they are planted.



This general idea is the same for larger potted shrubs and trees. Larger root systems might need to be hit with a shovel or cut with a knife to get the thick roots to break apart.

The day before planting water plants well. Soaking will prepare them for the process about to take place.

Before planting, research and follow all special instructions for your plants. Follow recommendations including correct depth for that species. Some shrubs need to be dug deeper while others need to be a few inches above the soil line. This will ensure that your new plant will settle for years of healthy growth.

After you have planted, water the plant well. This process is called 'mudding in'. It is difficult for newly planted shrubs to get water and nutrients from the root system in the ground up to the plant leaves and branches.

When plants show problems we call it 'transplant shock'. The first year of growth takes place underground. Don't worry if you notice slow growth or smaller plants. They will show great improvement the next year.

Water well the first year and avoid drying out. At least require one inch of water every week for most plants. Perhaps a little more for new transplants during dry spells.



(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

PROPER WATERING – NEW TREES

"Nothing of any consequence to a living plant happens in dry soil. Roots don't grow there. No nutrients pass from dry soil to plant. None of the symbiotic soil dwellers the plants need live there. Dry soil isn't part of the plant's vital ecology. It just doesn't count." -Edward C. Smith, The Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible.

Unfortunately many plant disease and problems are caused by poor watering practices. As a general rule in our area of New Jersey most plants, including lawns, require one inch of water per week. An inexpensive or homemade rain meter can save time and help keep your water bill down.

Trees, because of their height can have a hard time surviving the first 2 years. Here are a few suggestions that can help your trees thrive.

Purchase a Tree-Gator Bag, available at garden stores. You put water in the bag and it will slowly release the water at the base of your tree. Your local DWP may supply Gator water bags for city trees on your block. Call them and ask.

During prolonged periods without rain, place a few gallon jugs with pinholes on the bottom of the jug around the base of the plant and it will help keep the roots moist.

Water your tree in the morning, then put your hose on a slow light drip and leave it at the base for a few hours. That method gets water deep into the soil where the roots can easily drink it up. Doing this once a week will help your investment survive.

Happy Gardening,
James

James

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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM BALLET BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Prepare to be enchanted once again! American Repertory Ballet (ARB) proudly announces the return of Ethan Stiefel's celebrated production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, May 10-12, 2024 at the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center.

"This production was made during my first year as ARB's Artistic Director, and it truly represents the overall vision we wanted to kickstart at the time," says Stiefel. "Its blend of artful, athletic, whimsical and heartfelt movement and storytelling absolutely encapsulates ARB, and what makes both the show and the company wholly authentic. Simply put, our *A Midsummer's Night Dream* production is as unique as our artists and our repertoire."

This timeless tale, set to Felix Mendelssohn's iconic score with additional music written for film by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, promises to transport attendees into to a magical forest filled with fairies, elves, mischief, romance, and joy. Audiences of all ages will once again be cheering, laughing out loud, and mesmerized by

the ballet's whimsy and crisp storytelling. There is no better way to celebrate Mother's Day weekend!

With scenery by award-winning designer Howard Jones, lighting by Joseph Walls, and original costumes by ARB's Resident Costume Designer Janessa Cornell Urwin, Shakespeare's beloved masterpiece receives a modern transformation. The cast will feature the entire ARB Company alongside trainees from Princeton Ballet School.

For ticketing and information, please visit arballet.org
A Midsummer Night's Dream
 Friday, May 10, 2024 at 7 pm
 Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 2 pm and 7 pm
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NORTHFIELD BANK FOUNDATION FUNDS PREMIERE STAGES PLAYWRITING RESIDENCY IN RAHWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Premiere Stages, the professional theatre company in residence at Kean University, has returned to the Rahway School District in 2024, with a playwriting residency at Roosevelt Elementary School, graciously funded by the Northfield Bank Foundation.

Over the course of seven weeks, 18 sixth grade students at the Roosevelt Elementary School have learned the basics of playwriting and worked collaboratively to write original short plays for the stage. Premiere Stages Teaching Artists used the novel *Blended* by Sharon Draper, which the students were reading in class, as a launching pad to explore themes of identity and authenticity, and ultimately guided students through writing about friendships and overcoming conflicts. The residency culminated in a school wide assembly of the student-written monologues and scenes, performed by professional actors.

“Northfield Bank Foundation is proud to support the arts program at Kean University,” stated Diane Senerchia, Executive Director of Northfield Bank Foundation. “Northfield believes that the arts foster innovation and are crucial elements to our communities, and we salute the work and dedication of Premiere Stages and Kean University’s arts programming.”

The mission of the Northfield Bank Foundation is to support not-for-profit groups, institutions, schools or other organizations operating in the communities in which Northfield Bank does business - specifically Staten Island, Brooklyn and Central New Jersey. The Foundation focuses its efforts on projects to support education, health and human services, youth programs, and other types of community organizations or civic-minded projects that improve the quality of life around us. The Foundation has given to date in excess of \$10 million.

Premiere Stages’ education programs, under the umbrella of the Premiere Play Factory, have introduced theatre to thousands of children across

New Jersey, particularly those children in underserved and underfunded school districts. Through our playwriting residencies, Play Factory Performance Series of professional theatre for young audiences, and Camp Premiere for middle and high school students, we introduce students to theatre with an eye towards increasing literacy, supporting English language learners, modeling the collaborative process, and encouraging self-expression.

“The partnership between Premiere Stages and the Northfield Bank Foundation continues to be an extremely vital and important collaboration,” stated John J. Wooten, Producing Artistic Director of Premiere Stages. “Support from the Foundation has been instrumental in expanding the arts in Rahway’s public schools and providing the participating students with an essential outlet for creative expression.”

Sixth grade language arts teacher at Roosevelt Elementary School, Mrs. Jennifer Cirillo, was asked her thoughts about this play residency. “I am fortunate to have another opportunity to work along with [Lead Teaching Artist] Mr. Drew Hirschfield! It’s an incredible opportunity to watch the growth of students who had no previous knowledge of play writing, to have their written scripts acted out by professional actors! This awe-inspiring program enabled students to develop their own characters and to see them come to life,” said Mrs. Cirillo. “It was amazing for students to see that what started out as a small idea, developed into an entire play. When the students were able to watch and listen to professionals read and act out their work, the expressions on their faces were priceless.”

Premiere Stages is made possible in part through funding from W. John Bauer and Nancy Boucher, The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Carole Shaffer-Koros and Robert Koros and ExxonMobil Foundation, The Dubose and Dorothy Heyward Foundation, Blue Foundry Charitable Foundation, The Northfield

Bank Foundation, The Hyde and Watson Foundation, The Union Foundation, E.J. Grassmann Trust, The New Jersey Theatre Alliance, The Union County HEART Grant and through the generous support of individual patrons and local organizations. Discover Jersey Arts is our marketing partner. Visit JerseyArts.com for more information about other arts programming happening around the Garden State.

Premiere Stages is committed to producing topical plays and interactive programs that reflect people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds, national origins, nationalities, ancestry, religious groups, gender expression or identities, sexual orientation, political beliefs, ages, abilities and disabilities.

ABOUT PREMIERE STAGES

Created in 2004, Premiere Stages is the professional Equity theatre in residence at Kean University. Through its unique partnership with Kean, Premiere’s play development programs, educational initiatives, and professional development opportunities actively embrace the university’s academic curriculum while expanding the scope, accessibility, and prestige of the professional programming on campus. For more information, please visit Premiere Stages online at premierestagesatkean.com

ABOUT KEAN UNIVERSITY

Kean University, New Jersey’s urban research university, is a national institution of higher education recognized for its diversity, innovation and the social mobility of its graduates. Founded in 1855 as a teachers college, Kean has evolved into a thriving research university that supports students as they persist to graduation, give back to their communities and launch successful careers. Kean’s six colleges offer more than 50 undergraduate programs, six doctoral degree programs and more than 70 options leading to master’s degrees, professional diplomas or certifications, across a full range of academic subjects. Learn more at kean.edu.



(above) John J. Wooten, Producing Artistic Director and Nick Gandiello, Education and Play Festival Manager of Premiere Stages; Diane Senerchia, Executive Director, Northfield Bank Foundation; Drew Hirschfield and Jennifer Pillaga, Residency Teaching Artists, Mrs. Jennifer Cirillo and teachers and staff of Roosevelt Elementary School in Rahway and students in Mrs. Cirillo’s sixth grade class who participated in the residency.

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