

# Scotch Plains NJ

## WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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### UNICO CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Submitted by Angelo Ucciferri

The Scotch Plains Fanwood chapter of UNICO, America's largest Italian-American service organization, celebrated their 50th Anniversary on Saturday, April 13, 2024, at the Scotch Plains Italian American Club with over 125 guests in attendance. The national organization was founded in Waterbury, CT in 1922 to serve the community and contribute to charitable, cultural, and educational organizations. Then, in 1973, a group of Italian-American men of Scotch Plains and Fanwood were approached about starting a local chapter of UNICO, and they were chartered with over 70 founding members.

Two of the founding members were in attendance at the event, Luigi Suriano and Vincent Losavio. When the chapter was chartered, Luigi was elected as one of the two Vice Presidents and Vincent served on the Board of Directors. First Vice President, Daniela Sellinger, who presided over the event's ceremonies called up Luigi and Vincent to the podium to be recognized as a force behind preserving Italian heritage within the community and establishing the chapter.

The family of founding members were also recognized, including the daughters of Frank DiNizo, Cathy Fluta and Eileen Parenti - the daughter of Thomas Perrucci, Dorianne Perrucci - and the family of Carmen Ponzio, Carmen's wife, Arlene, and their son Andrew and his wife Celeste. Frank, Tom, and Carmen were great assets to the chapter and they each had immense pride in their Italian-American heritage.

Special guests that were in attendance included Anthony Bengivenga, the Executive Vice President of UNICO National - District Governor April Bengivenga of UNICO's NJ District 10 - UNICO National Membership and Retention Director Geri Samuel, who is also a past chapter President and current board member - JD Bryden, the Deputy District Director for Congressman Tom Kean, Jr - Al Mirabella, Union County Commissioner and Scotch Plains Township Manager - Scotch Plains Mayor, Josh Losardo - Fanwood Mayor, Colleen Mahr - members of the Scotch Plains Democratic Committee and Scotch Plains Township Council - Deputy Police Chief Al Sellinger of Scotch Plains Police Department - and Father Andy Prachar and Father Matthew Gonzalez of St. Bartholomew Church.

Since the chapter was formed in 1973, they have stayed true to UNICO's objectives and the motto of "Service Above Self". Some of their ongoing service initiatives have included co-hosting the town's largest Italian-American Labor Day Festival along with St. Bartholomew's Church, hosting Columbus Day Italian Heritage Celebrations, organizing food drives, donating thousands of dollars to organizations, individuals, and families in need, and donating over a quarter of a million dollars' worth of scholarships to local high school students of Italian descent to use towards their secondary education.

The chapter currently has 64 members and its officers include President, Alfonso Gialanella - First Vice President, Daniela Sellinger -



(above, l-r) SPF UNICO First Vice President Daniela Sellinger, and founding members Luigi Suriano, and Vincent Losavio.

Second Vice President, Jeff Blanck - Treasurer, Kon Zoganas - Recording Secretary, Matt Marino - and Corresponding Secretary, Maryann Matteo. The chapter's Board of Directors includes Ben Caruso, Paul Raphael, Luciana Rodak, Geri Samuel, Bob Steinbergher, and Stephen Steinbergher. The celebration wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the 50th Anniversary Committee, including Luciana Rodak, Jeffrey Blanck, Gina Suriano-Barber, Marla Mackey, Maryann Matteo, Paul Raphael, Geri Samuel, Daniela Sellinger and Angelo Ucciferri.

A delicious dinner spread was catered by local businesses, including Mazella's Gourmet Market of Mountainside and Godwit Coffee of Scotch Plains, and the night wrapped up with a DJ dance party.

The Scotch Plains Fanwood chapter of UNICO would like to thank all the community members and special guests in attendance. It was a wonderful celebration of 50 years of Italian heritage preservation and service to the community.

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# Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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# 2024 MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood 2024 Memorial Day Parade Committee has announced that the parade will be held on Monday, May 27. The theme of this year's parade is 80th Anniversary of D-Day - Never Was So Much Owed to So Few.

## MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

There will be a memorial service and presentation of wreaths at 9:00 a.m. in Fanwood at the Northside Train Station. A memorial tribute and laying of wreaths will take place at 10:00 a.m. at the gazebo on Park Avenue and Front Street in downtown Scotch Plains,

## MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Starting at 10:45 a.m. at the gazebo in downtown Scotch Plains, the Memorial Day Parade will proceed along Park Avenue, move down Martine Avenue into downtown Fanwood and end at La Grande Park in Fanwood. Individuals or organizations interested in participating in the parade may contact Bob LaCosta at the Township of Scotch Plains at (908) 939-8448 or [blacosta@scotchplainsnj.com](mailto:blacosta@scotchplainsnj.com).

Twin brothers Brian and Fr. David Santos are co-grand marshals for the Scotch Plains Memorial Day Parade.

The brothers have deep ties to Scotch Plains. Brian Santos and his family live here, while Fr. David was a popular priest at St. Bartholomew.

"It's a great honor," said Fr. David. "I've just

seen the great honor that's bestowed upon the grand marshals, the men and women who served their country, and I know that they're met with great admiration from the community."

"It's pretty cool. I'm definitely more integrated into the community now, having been here since 2015," Brian added.

For the identical twins, an interest in military service was always a thought in the back of their minds, but after witnessing the events of Sept. 11, 2001, as freshmen on the campus of Rutgers University, they felt an obligation to enlist and serve their country.

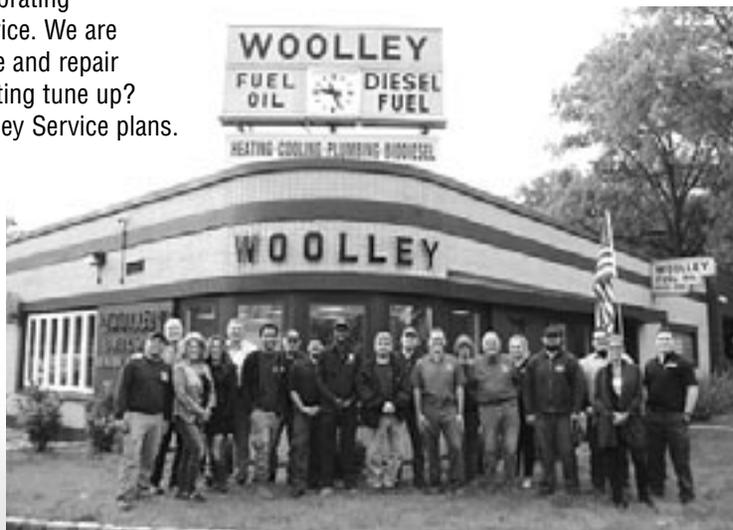
The brothers are very excited about this year's Memorial Day Parade, getting the chance to honor fellow service members as well as celebrate with a community they both care for very deeply.

"I think it's a good example to young people, specifically, that serving your country is noble, and it's a beautiful thing," Brian said. "That serving your country can give you a lot of opportunities you would've never considered."

"I just know that there's tremendous respect paid to veterans who serve our nation in the community," Fr. David added. "I just like being in that environment. And also just reconnecting with familiar faces, with people that maybe I haven't seen since I left."

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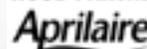
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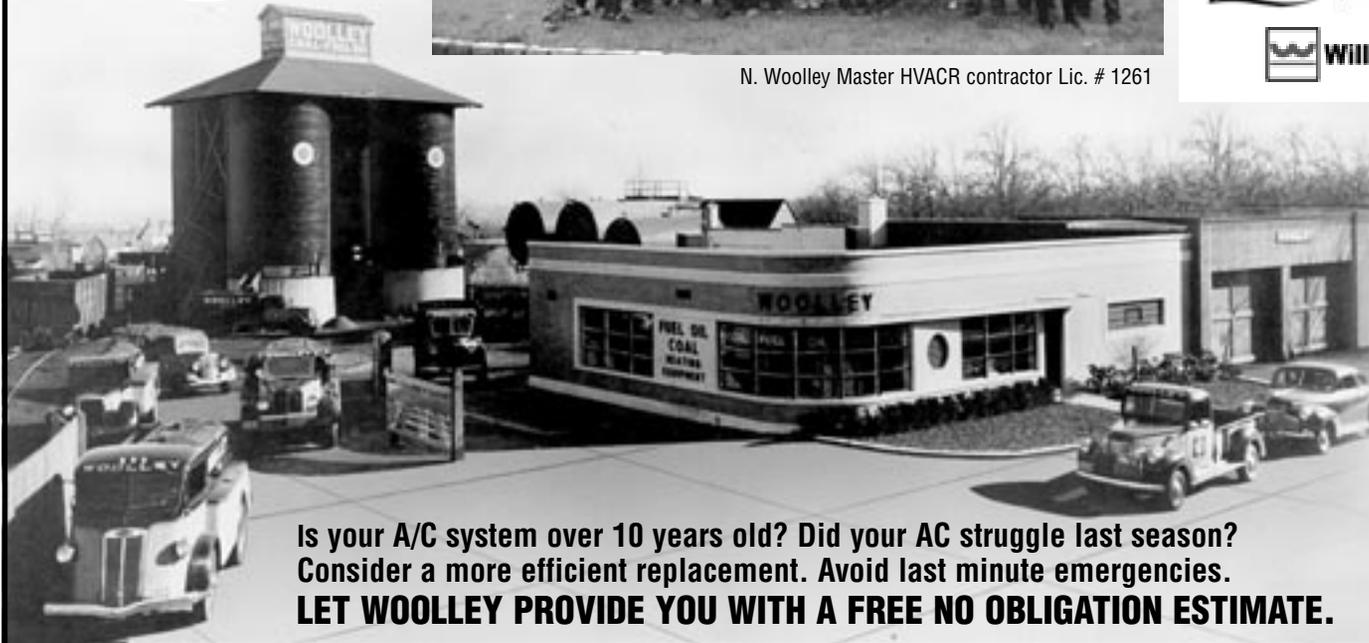
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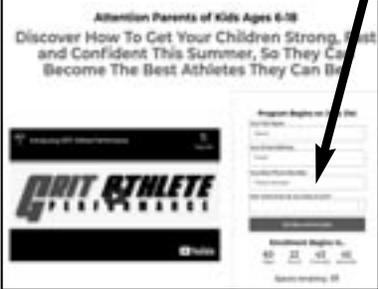
- “My son learned a ton and was highly motivated, he wanted to go, I never had to push him. Honestly, GRIT helped me accomplish precisely what I wanted to do; build confidence and a great mindset as a foundation for a lifetime of healthier living for my son.”  
*- Morgan GRIT Athlete Parent*
- “My son has been talking about it since the summer program ended. After he attended the summer program we have seen a tremendous improvement with Mason in sports. He is much more aggressive and focused now.”  
*- Robert, GRIT Athlete Parent*
- “My son is more disciplined and confident in himself”  
*- Steve Hughes, Grit Athlete Parent*
- “I have watched my children become more confident and vocal.”  
*- Christine Stramandinoli, Grit Athlete Parent*
- “His confidence has shot up in the last few months...and has carried forward to the way he approaches other activities like sports and schoolwork. My son is now making his bed daily and exercising every day.”  
*- Catherine Solfaro, Grit Athlete Parent*
- “We saw a noticeable difference in his throwing - he could throw it further and faster! The training definitely paid off!”  
*- Dara, GRIT Athlete Parent*

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## GIRL SCOUT WEEK AND WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



(above) The Mayor presented a proclamation for Women's History Month to Bernadette Hoyer and Jean Naugle of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains College Club, which is celebrating their 91st anniversary.

Courtesy photos



(above) Brownies and Daisies

### Borough of Fanwood

At its regular meeting held on March 18th, 2024, the borough council recognized Girl Scout Week and Women's History Month.

Julie Murphy, a member of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Girl Scout Service Team, led girls from Brownie Troop 40346 and Daisies from Troops 40106 and 40246 to the microphone as they read some of the ways the Girl Scouts have helped the Fanwood and Scotch Plains communities.

The organization is celebrating its 112th anniversary this year and today there are more than 50 million women that are Girl Scout alums with Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey serving some 13,000 girls across the state, according to the proclamation read by Mayor

Colleen Mahr.

"We want to thank people like Julia and the Scout Leaders for providing a safe and inclusive space for girls to flourish and grow and develop leadership skills," the Mayor said.

The Mayor presented a proclamation for Women's History Month to Bernadette Hoyer and Jean Naugle of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains College Club, which is celebrating their 91st anniversary.

Naugle, co-president of the College Club, said the club participates in service organizations and offers programs five times a year to the public and awards scholarships to between 10-12 young women each year. The Club has given out \$780,000 in scholarships to local young women since 1933.



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## FIRST RESPONDERS HONORED WITH SHIELD AWARDS

### Borough of Fanwood

The Father John S. Nelligan Council of the Knights of Columbus presented its 47th annual Shield Awards on April 17, to eight police, fire and EMS responders from Fanwood and Scotch Plains, a recognition of selfless community service performed by the men and women of these emergency services, paid and volunteer. The ceremony was held at the Italian-American Club on Valley Road, Scotch Plains.

This year's award recipients are:

#### FANWOOD:

Police Officer Carlos Gonzalez, Jr., presented by Lt. Dan Kranz, who said the officer was unable to attend the ceremony due to an ongoing medical issue. Lt. Kranz cited Officer Gonzalez, a Fanwood officer since November of 2020, after previously serving as a Newark police officer, for demonstrating resilience and determination as a police officer while dealing with a major medical issue.

EMT Spencer Doran, a member of the Fanwood Rescue Squad since May of 2022 and EMT since 2023, presented by Squad President Karolyn Buckridee, who cited Spencer's help in increasing the Tuesday evening crew from three to nine well-trained members as a member of the squad's membership committee, as well as riding on additional shifts, attendance at first aid council meetings as Fanwood's representative. Spencer, a high school senior, has been accepted to the University of Rhode Island's nursing program.

The Fanwood Fire Department, presented by Fire Chief John Piccola, to Captain Antony

Grasso, Jr., Captain Matthew Ridge (who was unable to attend), and Captain Vincent Bianco, for their efforts in running the crews and day-to-day operations of the department, citing their efforts of the comradery, morale and training of members.

#### SCOTCH PLAINS:

Officer Vincent Conti, a member of the Scotch Plains Police Department since 2022, presented by Deputy Chief Al Sellinger, for leading the department in arrests in 2023, as a member of the Union County Emergency Response Team, attendance of numerous classes to become a better police officer, his strong work ethic and outstanding productivity. Officer also was honored as the 2023 Scotch Plains Police Officer of the Year for his professional skills, leadership, character and work ethic.

EMT Jerry Handsman, a 33-year member of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad and current Squad First Vice President, presented by Captain Dan Sullivan, who said the EMT is available during daytime hours as a retiree and cited him for always being available when something needs to be done.

Joseph Flammia, a member of the Scotch Plains Fire Department, presented by Chief John Lestarchick, who said Firefighter Flammia has been a firefighter since 1979 when he joined the Clark Fire Department, and cited him for his skills as a former electrician he brings to the fire scene and at the firehouse, and for responding to fire calls day or night.

Emceeding the event was Grand Knight Patrick Harrington who was joined by District Deputy James Vari.

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## SEEDLING SALE MAY 4 -5

### Friends of the Fanwood Library

Attention gardeners: Just in time for spring planting!

A sale featuring organic and heirloom vegetable and herb seedlings will take place on Saturday, May 4 and Sunday, May 5 at the LaGrande Park Pavilion. The hours will be 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. both days (with rain dates the following weekend, May 11-12, during the same hours).

Hundreds of seedlings will be offered, including a variety of tomatoes, peppers (hot and sweet), cucumbers, peas, beans, kale, Swiss chard, eggplant, basil, parsley, lettuces and more.

The expert gardeners who started the plants from seed -- both of whom live in Fanwood -- will be on hand to offer advice and answer questions about when to plant, how to cultivate, suggestions on companion planting and other helpful tips.

Proceeds will benefit the Friends of the Fanwood Library.

## GAIL RHEIN, LOYAL SCOUT LEADER PASSES

### BSA Troop 104

With heavy hearts we share that Gail Rhein, loyal Scout Leader with Scouts BSA Troop 104 in Scotch Plains-Fanwood, passed away on April 10, 2024, after a brave battle with Leukemia.

Scouting is a youth-led, youth-run program, but the youth must be trained to be leaders. Adult role models in Scouting provide an ideal learning experience for all youth and every adult volunteer has something valuable to offer. Gail was an exemplary leader who touched the lives of countless scouts and instilled in them the virtue of community service.

She started off in Scouting when her son, Steven, joined Evergreen School Cub Pack 34. Their Scouting journey then continued with Troop 104, where Gail took on an active role as a Troop leader, assuming many responsibilities. She organized the Troop's holiday wreath and poinsettia fundraiser which helped to spread joy and cheer to everyone's home, extending it with the inclusion of a Chanukah candle fundraiser as well. Gail also participated in Boards of Review where the progress of each Scout was evaluated, and she was instrumental in encouraging them to continue further on the path to Eagle. She interacted with all recent Eagle Scouts, giving them just what they needed as a mentor, cheerleader, coach, trusted advisor, and friend.

Gail's greatest passion was helping others – in her career as a grief counsellor and as an active role model for community service to the scouts. She coordinated the troop's community service activities collaborating with other local groups to organize service opportunities for the Scouts. This included helping with the Fanwood holiday tree lighting ceremony, Fanwood 5K, Party in the Park, Easter Egg Hunt, Harvest Festival, Frazee House, Earth Day Cleanup, MLK Day of Service, and many projects at the Scotch Plains Community Gardens. She was immensely proud when Troop 104 received a commendation for contributing over 2,395 hours of community service in a single year across 30 different service projects – the most hours of any Scouting unit in the entire Patriots' Path Council of NJ.



(above) Gail Rhein was remembered by members of Troop 104, along with All Saints' Episcopal Church, during a public event to commemorate Gail and her contributions to the local scouting program. Courtesy photo

One of Gail's favorite Scouting activities was the week-long summer trip to Sabattis Adventure Camp in the Adirondacks where the Troop would organize their own campsite, sleep in tents, and cook all their own meals. She would help to comfort first-time campers who might have felt homesick, and she used her training as an EMT to ensure that Scouts with medical requirements maintained their regimens while away.

Most of all, Gail complemented the skills and experiences of the other Troop leaders, and she was "always there" to help the Scouts in any way that she could.

Members of Troop 104, along with All Saints' Episcopal Church, held a public event to commemorate Gail and her contributions to the local scouting program.

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has been shaping the lives of young adults for over a century. Founded in 1910, this organization has helped countless individuals develop essential life skills, values, and character traits that stay with them throughout their lives.

"May the great Scoutmaster of all good Scouts be with each and every one of us until we meet again, and may our footsteps lead unto Him."

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## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CERTIFICATE



(above, l-r) Ant Butters and Cooper Tamase hold up their teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) certificates. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School students were among the more than 300 Raiders who participated in the national program designed to provide students with the necessary tools to recognize, comprehend and respond to indicators of mental health and substance use issues among their peers.

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is proud to announce the outstanding success of its teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) certification program. This year, 329 high school students completed the program, marking a significant milestone as the initiative enters its second year. This remarkable achievement highlights the district's dedication to prioritizing the mental well-being of its students.

Recognizing the concerning increase in mental health challenges among adolescents across the nation, SPF initiated the program last year with funding from the Mental Health Association of New Jersey and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The district offers the course to its 11th-grade students as an integral component of their health curriculum. This course is designed to provide students with the necessary tools to recognize, comprehend, and respond to indicators of mental health and substance use issues among their peers. The tMHFA certification program, initially developed in Australia and adapted for the United States by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and Born This Way Foundation, aligns with New Jersey's comprehensive health standards, incorporating mental and emotional health components into the district's curriculum.

"Our commitment to promoting mental wellness extends beyond the classroom," said Kristine Iarussi, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools' Director of Counseling, Health and Wellness. "With over half of our high school students trained in tMHFA, we've empowered our student community to act proactively to recognize and address mental health concerns."

Participation in the certification program is a

school-wide effort with health teachers undergoing training sessions conducted by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. This comprehensive approach ensures that educators are well-prepared to effectively guide students through the curriculum.

As students navigate the complexities of modern life, including academic pressures, social dynamics, and familial expectations, initiatives like tMHFA can play a pivotal part in supplying them with the skills to promote resilience and well-being. Student testimonials underscore the program's impact on fostering a supportive environment where individuals feel encouraged to address mental health challenges. Ellie Szopinski, 16, emphasized the importance of approaching mental health discussions with empathy and understanding.

"The most notable thing was learning to recognize the behaviors themselves and how to identify these crises and stop them before they become life-threatening," Ant Butters, 16, added.

Saman Zeb, 17, highlighted the significance of destigmatizing mental health issues and promoting open dialogue.

"Mental health is often overlooked," Zeb said. "It's nice to have a course that allows you to take a deep breath and realize that your mental health and the mental health of others is really important."

Students also said the class encourages self-preservation.

"I feel like it's just as important for people to educate themselves not only to help others but also to help themselves," Cooper Tamase, 16, said, adding that mental health has been a focus of his for years.

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# LECTURE: INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA CAUSED BY THE HOLOCAUST

Congregation Beth Israel (CBI) in Scotch Plains will host a lecture by Irit Felsen, PhD, who will speak about the psychological effects of the Holocaust on survivors themselves, as well as on their children and families. The discussion will take place at CBI on Sunday, May 19, at 5 p.m. The program is free of charge and open to the community and is designed to appeal to a wide audience.

Dr. Felsen is a clinical psychologist specializing in trauma and traumatic loss and is a renowned speaker in her field, both nationally and internationally. Her work has focused on the long-term effects of the Holocaust on survivors and their families, and on intergenerational transmission of unique vulnerabilities and resilience to descendants.

A daughter of two Holocaust survivors, Dr. Felsen grew up in Israel and has been living in the United States since she did her postdoctoral training at Yale University. She is Co-Chair of the Trauma Work Group in the NGO on Mental Health in Consultative Relationship to the United Nations and was the Chair of the Covid-19 APA Interdisciplinary Task Force during the years of its operation. She is an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University and at Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University. She also has a private practice in New Jersey.

"We are excited to invite Dr. Felsen to our community," said Rita Geller, who is a co-chair of the Second/Third Generation Holocaust



(above) Dr. Irit Felsen

Survivors Group, sponsor of the event. "Besides being informative for the members of our group, whose parents or grandparents survived the Holocaust, it will be very interesting for everyone else too. Intergenerational trauma is a hot topic in psychology today."

The Second/Third Generation Holocaust Survivors Group was created at Congregation Beth Israel, but also includes participants from other area synagogues and the community. It functions as a support group for its members to share experiences. The group also plans events to educate the public about the Holocaust.

Congregation Beth Israel is located at 18 Shalom Way, Scotch Plains, NJ (corner of Martine Avenue). For additional information about the event, call the synagogue office at (908) 889-1830.



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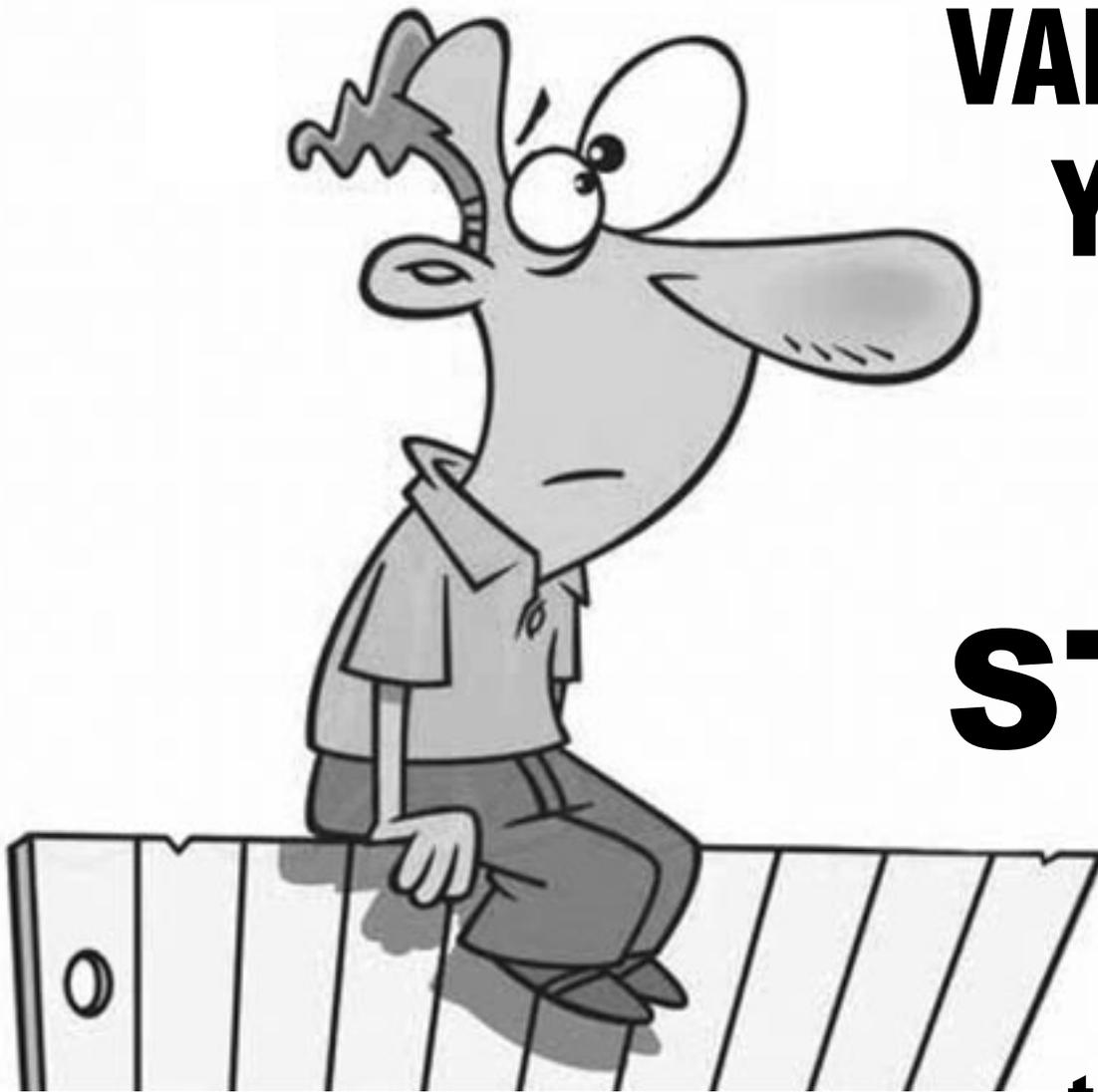
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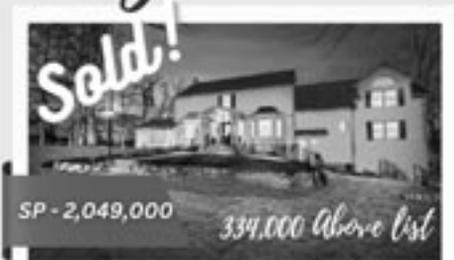
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# SCOTCH PLAINS FANWOOD HS HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS – MAY 9

Submitted by Marie Leppert  
and Michael Loberfeld

Whether you are an SPFHS alumni, student, faculty member, or a local community member, please join us on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Scotch Plains- Fanwood High School auditorium as thirteen alumni are inducted into the SPFHS Hall of Fame. The ceremony will be emceed by former New Jersey Governor Donald DiFrancesco, himself a SPFHS Hall of Famer.

All are encouraged to personally nominate SPFHS alumni for their future consideration. To do so, please visit the SPFHS Alumni Association's website: [spfk12.org/alumni](http://spfk12.org/alumni)

The following SPFHS alumni will be inducted May 9:

## **BARBARA ADAMS AUSTIN '61 (DECEASED):**

In her youth, she established the Fanwood Nature Preserve. Went on to become a professional artist, gardener, and writer. Commissioned to do city murals, she produced extensive exhibitions, and presented all over the South as a Master Gardener. Presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who's Who in 2018.

## **GEORGE FALKOWSKI '78:**

Four-time Emmy Award-winner in professional sports and news TV. His career includes News 12 New Jersey and the Boston Red Sox and Bruins network.

## **DANIEL CATULLO III '90:**

Multiple Emmy Award-winning director and producer. He has worked with hundreds of major artists and celebrities, including Alicia Keys and Dave Matthews Band.

## **PETER KURAN '74:**

Began career on Star Wars at 19. Became animation supervisor on George Lucas' "The Empire Strikes Back". Owns VCE, a leader of visual imaging in motion pictures, working on over 300 films. Won an Academy Award for developing a process to restore color film.

## **MICHAEL RICHARD '65:**

Pioneering medical innovator (now retired). Involved in the development of PureWick, an external catheter, saving many hundreds of thousands of patients the pain and suffering of urinary tract infections. PureWick continues improving lives worldwide.

## **NATE JONES 2000:**

NFL player for eight years, including in Super Bowl XLVI. Current NFL referee. College Academic All- American, Rhodes Scholar nominee.

## **GENE SCHILLER '50**

Scotch Plains- Fanwood Athletic director 1983-1999. Scotch Plains township Director of Recreation 1957-1966. Also played four sports and was class president while an SPFHS student. Coached football at SPFHS.

## **HON. ZAHID N. QURAIHI '93:**

First Muslim- American article III judge in United States history. First Asian- American federal judge in New Jersey. U.S. Army combat veteran. Most importantly, proud father, and grateful son.

## **RICHARD WETHERALD '54 (DECEASED):**

Forty-four years of service in Princeton, NJ as a research associate in the field of Greenhouse Warming. Fought the White House's attempt to

suppress his findings on Global Warming. Honored as "Meteorologist Professional of 2007".

## **ERROLL SOUTHERS '74:**

Internationally recognized expert on counter terrorism, public safety, homeland security, and infrastructure protection. Director of the Safe Communities Institute and Homegrown Violent Extremism Studies at the University of South Carolina. Professor at USC Price School of Public Policy.

## **MIKE MARINO '81:**

Actor and comedian performing in major comedy clubs, and event centers in the world. He has hosted award ceremonies, and acted in commercials and soap operas. Inducted into the NJ Comedy Hall of Fame, and won the USO Bob Hope Comedy Award for his performances for the military.

## **MAURO CHECCHIO '42 (DECEASED):**

A former Mayor of Scotch Plains. He served as Deputy of Commerce under Governor Cahill. As the first State Energy Czar, he helped organize the New Jersey Open Space Trust and the NJ Forestry Management Association Team. He was also instrumental in founding a Kean University campus in China.

## **RICH FEINBERG '79:**

A long and dedicated career in the television industry including numerous sports Emmy awards. He has worked for ESPN, and elsewhere. He leads a team of award-winning producers, directors, videographers, editors, and graphic designers.



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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](http://arballet.org)*

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# HINDU FESTIVAL DIWALI NOW A SCHOOL HOLIDAY

## Universal Society of Hinduism

Hindus have welcomed Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools (SPFPS) in New Jersey announcing closure of its eight schools (in its 2024-2025 School Calendar) on their most popular festival Diwali; which falls on November one this year.

Hindu statesman Rajan Zed, in a statement in Nevada today, thanked SPFPS for finally understanding the longstanding feelings of the Hindu community; which thought that it was simply not fair with Hindu pupils to be at school on their most popular festival, while schools were closed around other religious days.

Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism, stated that since it was vital for Hindu families to celebrate Diwali day together at home with their children; closing schools on Diwali would ensure that and would also display how respectful and accommodating SPFPS was to their faith.

Rajan Zed indicated that holiday on Diwali in SPFPS would be a step in the positive direction in view of the reported presence of a considerable

number of Hindu students; as it was important to meet the religious and spiritual needs of Hindu pupils.

Zed hoped that SPFPS would make Diwali holiday a permanent fixture of its school calendar in the coming years, thus recognizing the intersection of spirituality and education.

Rajan Zed noted that awareness about 'other' religions, thus created by such holidays like Diwali, would make SPFPS students well-nurtured, well-balanced, and enlightened citizens of tomorrow.

Zed further says that Hinduism is rich in festivals and religious festivals are very dear and sacred to Hindus. Diwali, the festival of lights, aims at dispelling the darkness and lighting up the lives and symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

Hinduism is the oldest and third largest religion of the world with about 1.2 billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal. There are about three million Hindus in the USA.

SPFPS is a regional school district serving

5,500 students from preschool through 12th grades. Per its School Calendar 2024-2025, besides Diwali; schools are closed on Rosh Hashanah (two days), Eid Al-Fitr; while Christmas fell in December 23-31 Winter Break, and Spring Recess April 14-18 (which includes Good Friday on April 18) was just before Easter (April 20).

Dr. Joan Mast and Evan Murray are Superintendent and Board President respectively of SPFPS, which covers diversified communities of Township of Scotch Plains and the Borough of Fanwood; and besides others, also teaches classes on chemical dependency and family life education. Its goals include "Diversity" and "Justice".

*Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, with variations celebrated in other Indian religions. It symbolises the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance".*

Source: Wikipedia

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# LIBRARY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

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Monday, May 27 - Library Closed for Memorial Day



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**Wednesday Movies**  
 Wednesdays at Noon  
 in our downstairs meeting room.  
**Replace an Ancestor's Damaged Gravestone**  
 Thursday, May 2 at 7pm  
 Genealogist and librarian April Earle will discuss the research and steps required to replace an ancestor's damaged gravestone. Registration is required for this virtual program.

**Balance Awareness with Yasmin Ofek**  
 Fridays at 10am  
 a gentle but effective approach to moving confidently throughout the lifespan. Registration is required for this virtual class.

**Hypertension Clinic**  
 Friday, May 3, 10am to Noon  
 in the Adult Room with a public health nurse from Union County. Walk-ins welcome.

**Bring Your Own Book**  
 Monday, May 6 at 10am  
 an informal discussion of what participants have recently read and enjoyed. Registration is required.

**Vinyl Revival**  
 Thursday, May 8 at 7pm  
 Join collector Lance Jacobs for Vinyl Revival and see how much your treasured albums might be worth. Registration is recommended.

**The Florian Schantz Jazz Combo**  
 Saturday, May 11 at 2pm  
 The Florian Schantz Jazz Combo will perform music from Broadway and Hollywood. Registration is strongly recommended.

**Friends of the Library Meeting & Election**  
 Monday, May 13 at 7:15pm  
 Board nominations are due May 10th.

**Drop In Crafting**  
 Tuesday, May 14 at 1pm  
 bring your work-in-progress and craft with company.

**Board of Trustees meeting**  
 Wednesday, May 15 at 7pm  
**Morris Museum Astronomical Society Visit**  
 Wednesday, May 15 at 8:30pm  
 Members of the Morris Museum Astronomical Society will bring telescopes to the Library lot so we can enjoy the moon's first quarter phase.

**Evening Book Club**  
 Thursday, May 16 at 7pm  
 will discuss Tom Lake by Ann Patchett.  
**Drawing with Sandra Cerchio**  
 Monday, May 20 at 10am  
 Registration is required.

**Conservation in the Classroom with Zachary Rittner**  
 Monday, May 20 at 7pm  
 Learn how the SPFH environmental science class is caring for wildlife, and meet their quail chicks. Registration is recommended.

**Afternoon Book Club**  
 Tuesday, May 21 at 1pm  
 will discuss The Hero of This Book by Elizabeth McCracken.

**Local caver Carl Heitmeyer Discussion**  
 Thursday, May 23 at 7pm  
 Local caver Carl Heitmeyer will share his adventures exploring caves around the world. He'll discuss cave geology, preparedness, and rescue. Registration is recommended.

**Author Susan Tate Ankeny Discussion**  
 Wednesday, May 29 at 7pm  
 Author Susan Tate Ankeny will discuss her book American Flygirl, about Hazel Ying Lee, the first Asian American to fly with the Women Airforce Service Pilots. Registration is required for this virtual program.

**Drop In Crafting**  
 Thursday, May 30 at 7pm  
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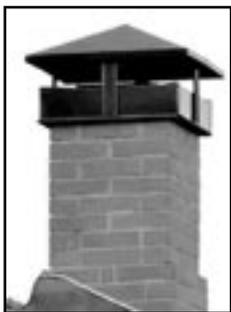
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## A PHONE CALL CAN SAVE A VETERAN'S LIFE - HELP US SAVE VETS!

*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](mailto:NJVN1775@gmail.com) or call 973-332-1556. Check out our website [NJVN.org](http://NJVN.org) for our services and accomplishments.

## HAIR IS COMING TO CDC THEATRE IN CRANFORD

The American classic rock-musical Hair, the final production of the 105th season at CDC Theatre, celebrates the sixties counterculture in all its barefoot, long-haired, bell-bottomed, beaded and fringed glory. To an infectious energetic rock beat, the show wows audiences with songs like "Aquarius," "Good Morning, Starshine," "Hair," "I Got Life" and "Let The Sunshine In." Exploring ideas of identity, community, global responsibility and peace, Hair remains as relevant as ever as it examines what it means to be a young person in a changing world.

Controversial in 1968, with its rock music, hippies, nude scene, multiracial cast, and anti-war irreverence, it billed itself as "the American Tribal Love-Rock Musical." Audiences didn't quite know what to make of that. But they figured it out eventually.

To appreciate how unexpected Hair was in 1968, consider what else was playing on Broadway the week it opened: Hello, Dolly!, Man of La Mancha, Funny Girl, and Fiddler on the Roof. One of Fiddler's signature numbers, of course, is an anthem about the importance of "Tradition." This new musical questioned everything about tradition.

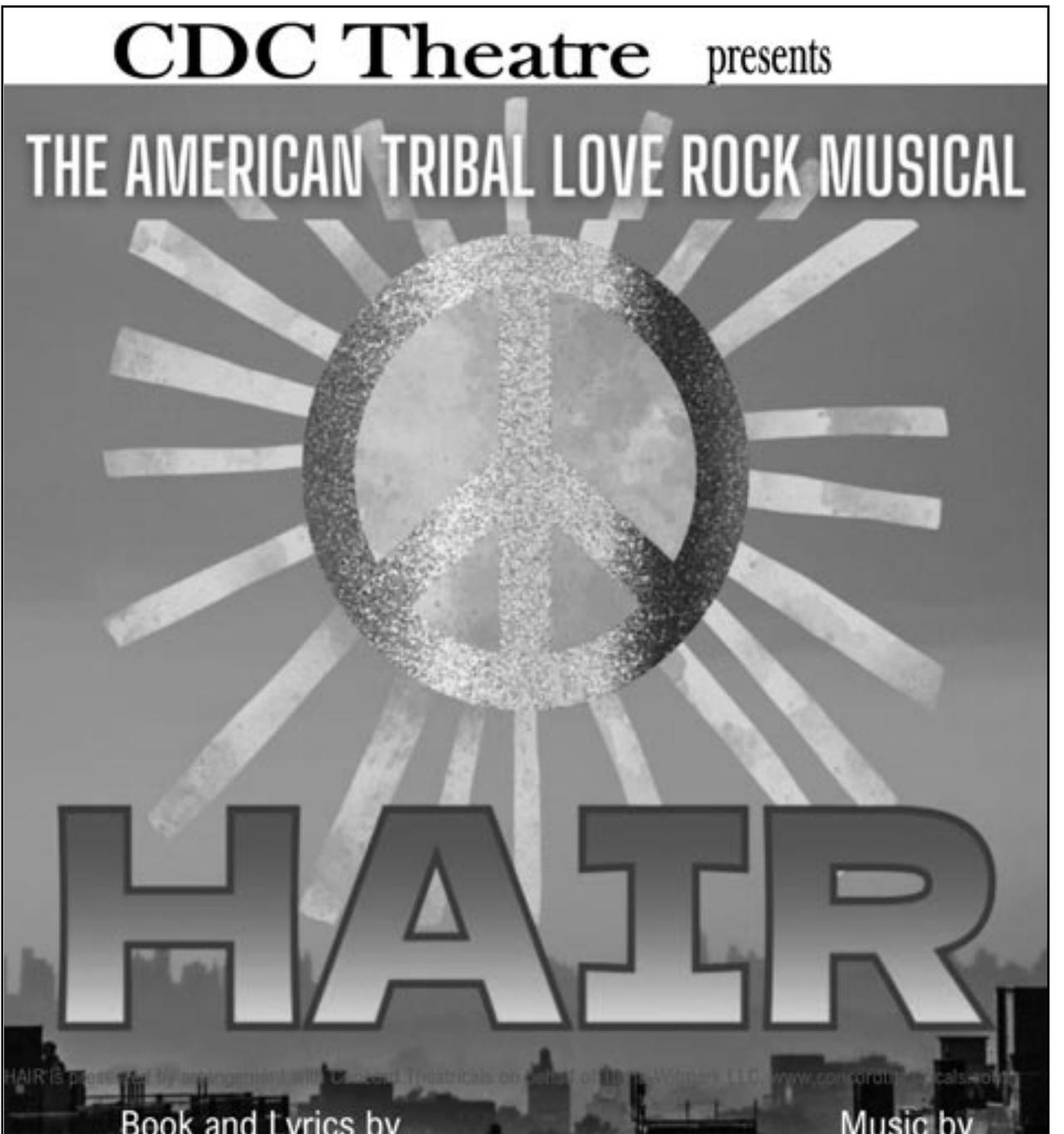
Up until Hair, Broadway's idea of rock music had been the Elvis-like character in Bye Bye Birdie. Galt MacDermot's music for Hair was much closer to the real thing. And the flower-power lyrics of James Rado and Jerome Ragni, like those from the second act's "Three-Five-Zero-Zero", didn't sound like traditional show-tunes either.

This thoroughly American "Tribal Love-Rock Musical" soon became a hit all over the world making rock music something that theater was forced to reckon with. In shows like Jesus Christ Superstar, Grease, Dreamgirls and Rock of Ages, the rock musical became a Broadway genre. Hair got there first.

The show will run weekends from May 3rd through the 19th. For the best selections and prices, visit [cdctheatre.org](http://cdctheatre.org) for tickets.

**CDC Theatre** presents

**THE AMERICAN TRIBAL LOVE ROCK MUSICAL**



**HAIR**

Book and Lyrics by **Gerome Ragni James Rado** Music by **Galt MacDermot**

**Fri./Sat. May 3-18** **Sun. May 12, 19**  
**8pm** **2pm**

78 Winans Ave Cranford, NJ  [cdctheatre.org](http://cdctheatre.org) 908-276-7611

 Made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

## MEANINGFUL TOUCH HOME CARE RIBBON CUTTING

Meaningful Touch Home Care opened its doors at 141 South Avenue, Suite 2, Fanwood, on April 15th with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Cutting the ribbon is owner Roslyn Benedetto, BSN, RN. Mayor Colleen Mahr, holding the

ribbon, and Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce President Jim Mooney were there to welcome the new business, which provides in-home care including companion, respite, memory and live-in care as well as private-duty nursing.



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<b>Florham Park Press</b> NJ Qty: 5,500 Zip: 07932	<b>Garwood Times</b> NJ Qty: 2,500 Zip: 07027	<b>Green Brook Gazette</b> NJ Qty: 3,000 Zip: 08812	<b>BUSINESS • LIFE KENILWORTH</b> NJ Qty: 3,500 Zip: 07033	<b>NJ LIFE in LINDEN</b> Qty: 17,900 Zip: 07036	<b>Long Hill LEADER</b> NJ Qty: 3,500 Zips: 07933, 07946, 07980
<b>MADISON MONTHLY</b> NJ Qty: 6,300 Zip: 07940	<b>MOUNTAINSIDE VIEW</b> NJ Qty: 2,900 Zip: 07092	<b>New Providence NEWS</b> NJ Qty: 5,100 Zip: 07974	<b>OUR TOWN Rahway, NJ</b> Qty: 13,000 Zip: 07065	<b>ROSELLE PARK MONTHLY</b> Qty: 5,600 Zip: 07204	<b>Scotch Plains NJ</b> WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY Qty: 9,400 Zip: 07076
<b>Short Hills MILLBURN MONTHLY</b> NJ Qty: 8,200 Zips: 07041, 07078	<b>Summit Times</b> NJ Qty: 9,600 Zip: 07901	<b>Spirits of UNION</b> NJ Qty: 6,800 Zip: 07083 (partial)	<b>WARREN MONTHLY</b> NJ Qty: 6,200 Zip: 07059	<b>Watchung Post</b> NJ Qty: 2,700 Zip: 07069	<b>Westfield MONTHLY</b> NJ Qty: 11,800 Zip: 07090

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4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700	\$1900
6 Units	6.5" x 6.25" or 10" x 4"	\$240	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1400	\$1600	\$1800	\$2000	\$2200
9 HALF PAGE	6.5" x 9" or 10" x 7"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1300	\$1600	\$1900	\$2200	\$2400	\$2700
12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700	\$3000
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000	\$3400
2-PAGE SPREAD	21" x 14"	\$700								
BACK PAGE	10" x 14"	\$500								
FRONT PAGE BANNER	8.25" x 2"	\$320								
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- **SEO SERVICES: AVERAGE COST \$1,000 - \$2,000 PER MONTH**  
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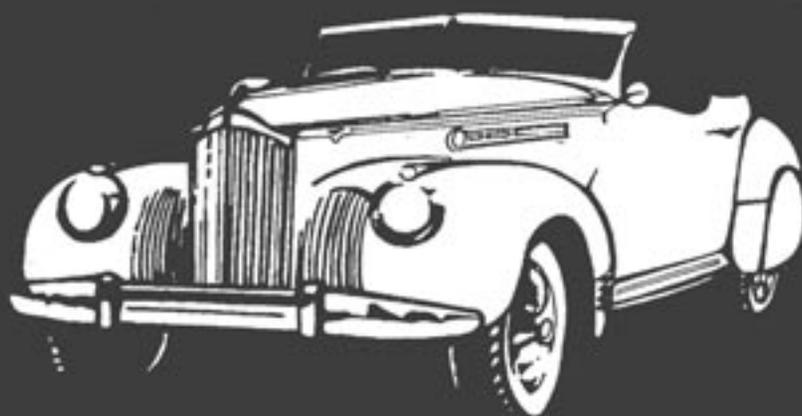
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