

CRANFORD MONTHLY NJ

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HOMEGROWN DONORS BENEFITS CRANFORD FAMILY CARE

Submitted by Billy Folinusz

for Cranford Family Care Association

When you graduate high school, many wonder about high school reunions and catching up with friends you have not seen for years. Often this occurs in the high school gym, a local bar, or some other venue that enables you to reconnect with fellow classmates. But graduating from Cranford High School and calling Cranford your hometown means something to those who grew up here. CHS friends, Class of 1976, Dave Panetta, Bill Folinusz and Gerry Shamey, along with Class of 1977, Mark Irwin and Anne Paterno realized they wanted to do more for Cranford.

They decided to find a way to bring their classmates and other graduates from across generations together, over a common cause of golf, friendship, and charity, leveraging the strong bonds built in the halls of Cranford High School decades ago.

Beginning in 2022, "Cranford Homegrown" was an informal get-together of the Class of 1976 over a golf match for bragging rights amongst friends. Over a few beers at the Cranford Elks, following the first match, it was decided that they wanted to give back to their hometown, where many of their stories originated. The charity of choice was obvious: Cranford Family Care, formerly known as the Cranford

Welfare Association. This was founded amid the Great Depression by local civic organizations and residents to "assist struggling Cranford residents to become self-sufficient."

The mission today remains the same and Cranford Homegrown found its cause.

In its first year as a charity tournament in 2023, 88 individuals, all graduates of Cranford High School, came together to raise \$6,500 for Cranford Family Care. This year, the tournament continued to grow, with 96 golfers participating and raising \$7,500. This money would immediately make a difference in the lives of Cranford residents and neighbors in need, emphasizing the significant impact of the tournament on the community.

This story is a testament to the unique opportunity, and pride many have in calling Cranford their hometown. Despite the changes that time brings, the call to help our town resonated with those 5 CHS graduates. These folks are honored to have the opportunity to help and grateful to all participants, volunteers and sponsors.

The success of our outing is a testament to the friendships developed in our youth. The generosity from individual Cranford residents and businesses alike defines why Cranford is a great place to call home.

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(above) Cranford Homegrown Open event organizers: Dave Panetta, Bill Folinusz, Anne Paterno, Mark Irwin, and Gerry Shamey.

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“BE OUR GUEST” FOR BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

CDC Theatre

One of the most enchanting musicals of all time, Disney's Beauty and the Beast is coming to CDC Theatre, 78 Winans Ave. in Cranford, NJ with eight performances December 6th-15th.

This ‘tale as old as time’ is based on Disney’s

Academy Award-winning film and features the timeless story you love, along with all your favorite characters and songs. The romantic and beloved fairytale recounts the story of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, who is really a young prince trapped under the spell of an enchantress. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved, the curse will end, and he will be transformed into his former self. But time is running out. If the Beast does not learn his lesson soon, he and his household will be doomed for all eternity.

With music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Howard Ashman and Tim Rice, and book by Linda Woolverton, the show has all the wonderful songs made famous in the Academy Award-winning animated feature film, along with new ones written for the stage adaptation. The enchantment never ends! The magic will unfold in front of your eyes as the talented cast, dancing dishes, gorgeous costumes, and spectacular settings bring this Disney classic to life on stage.

Celebrate your holidays with the most beautiful love story ever told!

For more information and the best ticket selection and prices, visit cdctheatre.org today. Disney’s Beauty and the Beast is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI) and made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

CDC Theatre presents



Disney BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Dec. 6,7,13,14 - 8pm
Dec. 7,8,14,15 - 2pm

78 Winans Ave., Cranford, NJ
cdctheatre.org

Mus. by Alan Menken Lyrics by Howard Ashman & Tim Rice Book by Linda Woolverton
Original Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions Original Directed by Robert Jess Roth

DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All advertised performance materials are also supplied by MTI, www.mtintl.com


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K OF C DONATES TO ELIZABETH COALITION TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS

The Cranford Knights of Columbus held our 21st Annual Golf Outing in September. It was a tremendous success with 95 golfers attending at the Galloping Hill Golf Course in Kenilworth. Each year, the Council selects worthy charities to be the benefactors of the outing proceeds and this year we selected The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless for the great work that they do. The Council had a ceremonial check presentation in the Mary Garden at St. Michael's Church where we made a donation of \$5,000.

The Council would like to formally thank all of the local businesses and organizations that support our Annual Golf Outing every year and all of the volunteers that help and make this worthy event a success each and every year since its inception in 2004.

The Cranford Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Fraternal Organization dedicated to our four Core Principles: Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. The Cranford Council supports many charities and civic causes locally, state-wide, and nationally and we are committed to being a viable part of our community.

For information about joining the Council, please contact our Grand Knight Tom Turner at 908-884-4083 or visit the Council website at cranfordknights.org.



(above, l-r) Executive Director of The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless Linda Tober-Flores, Past Grand & Golf Outing Chair John Doolan, and Past Grand Knight Pat Forker. On the back left are Brothers Larry Guarglia, Bob Haddad, Past Grand Knight James Winter, and our Worthy Chaplain Monsignor Tim Shugrue.

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KATHLEEN MCMAHON SWORN IN AS CASA VOLUNTEER FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Child Focus

Kathleen McMahon of Cranford proudly took the oath as a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), on November 1, 2024, along with fellow trainees Deirdre Monroy of Scotch Plains, Lydia Hernandez-Walford of Bayonne, Ellen Devin of Westfield, Esther Paden of Linden, and La Wrence Burroughs and Tisa Joyner-Nance of Rahway. Union County Superior Court Judge Gavin I. Handwerker presided over the swearing-in.

These volunteers, equipped to champion the best interests of child victims of abuse and neglect, join a team of hundreds of devoted advocates with CASA of Passaic and Union Counties. Child Focus, the nonprofit organization that operates this CASA program, aims to provide dedicated life-changing advocacy and support services to each of the more than 500 children living in foster care through no fault of their own, across both counties.

“These seven dedicated individuals have made an invaluable commitment to ensure that every child’s voice is heard and valued. We are proud to welcome them to the Child Focus family,” said Erica Fischer-Kaslander, Executive Director of Child Focus. “Each CASA volunteer brings unique perspectives and strengths that impact the lives of those who need it most. There is a waitlist of children awaiting an advocate, and we urgently need community members to step up to serve. We encourage anyone interested in supporting vulnerable children to attend an upcoming information session to learn how they can make a difference.”

No specific qualifications are required to become a CASA volunteer; Child Focus provides comprehensive training to equip volunteers with the skills needed to advocate effectively. Volunteers commit to visiting their assigned

children at least once a month and collaborate with caregivers, educators, and other key figures in the child's life to make informed recommendations to the court.

This winter, Child Focus will hold two expedited CASA training sessions, each of which cover all necessary material over two- and three-week periods, as an alternative to the traditional six-week course.

Child Focus urges the community to enroll in CASA winter training to support growing list of abused and neglected children awaiting an advocate. This winter, Child Focus will hold two expedited CASA training sessions, each of which cover all necessary material over two- and three-week periods, as an alternative to the traditional six-week course.

Those interested in learning more about securing a spot in one of the two winter trainings must attend one of these information sessions. Union County:

Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 12 p.m.

Child Focus office

1143 East Jersey Street, 2nd Floor

Elizabeth

Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 5:30 p.m.

Rahway Public Library, 2 City Hall Plaza

Rahway.

Register now at

casapassaicunion.org/info-session.

ABOUT CHILD FOCUS:

Child Focus prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect by amplifying their voices and working toward lasting, permanent solutions that address their unique situations and provide support needed to thrive. This critical work is accomplished through three distinct but complementary programs: CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, NJ Safe Babies Court Team, and the Open Door Store. For more information about Child Focus, log on to childfocusnj.org.



(above) Cranford's Kathleen McMahon Sworn In as CASA Volunteer for Foster Youth. To learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer visit casapassaicunion.org/info-session.

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TRACK CLUB SHINES AT USATF JUNIOR OLYMPIC MEET

WESTFIELD AREA YMCA

Twenty-five young Westfield Area YMCA Flyers Track Club athletes competed alongside nearly 500 other participants at the USATF New Jersey Junior Olympic Cross Country Meet on November 3. Held at Central Park in Morris Plains, the Flyers delivered outstanding performances at the meet and brought home four national qualifiers:

- Greyson Dunleavy (Boys 7-8) - 3rd Place;
- Grayson Van Dyk (Boys 7-8) - 4th Place;
- Leo Anspach (Boys 11-12) - 14th Place;
- and Luke Barba (Boys 13-14) - 8th Place

In addition to individual accomplishments the team results showcased the Flyers' collective strength and teamwork:

Girls 11-12 team finished 5th in the 3000m race with runners Katalyna Aguilar, Avalee Deutsch, Sandra Jakubiuk, Sarah Licata, and Mika Snyder.

Boys 11-12 team secured a 4th place finish in the 3000m race with strong showings from Leo Anspach, Slater Centeno, Nicholas DiChiaro, Doruk Karagoz, Deven Lele, and Adrian Wood.



(above) Group of Westfield Area YMCA Flyers Athletes in the Boys Division.

Boys 13-14 team earned an impressive 3rd place finish in the 4000m race led by Luke Barba, Benjamin Halpern, Ronan Connolly, Graham Gallagher, Davin Hettiarachchi, and Liam Grunwald.

The Westfield Area YMCA Flyers Track Club is led by USATF-certified coaches and serves

hundreds of athletes ages 7-15 year-round. Athletes learn the fundamentals of distance running and techniques unique to off-track running, with more experienced runners building on fundamental skills through conditioning and in-depth training. Registration is open now for the Flyers Winter Conditioning program beginning December 2, 2024.

For more information about Flyers Track Club, visit yflyerstrackclub.com or contact Michelle Almeida at malmeida@westfielddynj.org 908-301-9622 ext. 279.

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Visit westfielddynj.org to learn more about Westfield Area YMCA and Cranford YMCA programs. Financial assistance is available for YMCA memberships and programs to those who qualify.

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The Cranford YMCA is the newest branch of the Westfield Area YMCA which has been strengthening the communities of Cranford, Garwood, Mountainside and Westfield since 1923. Financial assistance is available for YMCA programs and memberships.

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TOY DRIVE - DEC 8TH

Cranford PBA Local #52

We're excited to announce our Annual PBA Toy Drive in memory of Honorary Officer Ray Schwartz will be held on Sunday, December 8th from 10am-2pm at the Cranford Elks.

Please stop by for some coffee, bagels, donuts and help us in our effort to support the children of Morristown Hospital's Goryeb Children's Hospital.

Unwrapped and New children's toys are welcomed. Please no teddy bears, the hospital does not accept them.

Gift cards are greatly encouraged because it helps families with their daily transportation to and from the hospital, meals and fun activities for the children. We greatly appreciate your kindness and support in advance.

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**IN MEMORY OF
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RAY SCHWARTZ**

CRANFORD SUPPORTS THE TROOPS IN A BIG WAY

Submitted by William Folinusz, Major, U.S. Army

In January 2024 over 1,500 Soldiers of the 44th Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) of the New Jersey National Guard deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve throughout the Middle East. The unit is filled with New Jerseyans, including several soldiers from our hometown of Cranford.

In May, in response to this deployment, the Cranford VFW Post #335 advertised and hosted a care package program to support these soldiers so far away from home. The response from the citizens and organizations of our town was overwhelming; Cranford delivered when it was needed most. The drive collected snacks, toiletries, books, coffee (over 20 pounds from Track 5), as well as letters from school children from all across Cranford. With the help of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and significant financial support from the Cranford Jaycees, Cranford Knights of Columbus, and Boxcar along with local citizens and other organizations, the VFW was able to collect supplies for over 40 care packages averaging over 12 pounds each. This equates to over 500 pounds of supplies, quite a feat from the local community.

Between June and September of this year the Cranford VFW sent out the care packages in phases to New Jersey units across the Middle East and Africa. The critical nature of this effort

was highlighted in August when a New Jersey unit was attacked in Syria by enemy drones resulting in eight Soldiers being wounded and multiple living areas being destroyed. Of course, in those living quarters many of the Soldiers personal belongings were lost as well. In direct response the Cranford VFW sent over 10 care packages within days of the attack to ensure soldiers would receive the needed personal supplies and to let them know they were supported at home despite their ongoing hardships.

These New Jersey soldiers are concluding their deployment in the coming months and hope to be home in time for Christmas. As the holidays approach it is important to remember that there are American servicemen and women across the world that are standing guard on the edges of freedom enabling our society to enjoy the freedom and prosperity we see today.

Governor Murphy gave the following remarks at the unit's deployment ceremony in Trenton, "To all of you in the 44th, whether you're carrying on the legacy of the Continental Army, or you're carrying on a family legacy of your own, or perhaps you're the first member of your family to serve, let me say to each and every one of you, thank you for your service and thank you to your families for the sacrifice they are making."

PEARL HARBOR DAY SERVICES – DEC. 7TH

Cranford VFW Post #335

On Saturday, December 7th at 9:00 a.m., Cranford VFW Post #335 will hold their annual outdoor Memorial Service in remembrance of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 which ignited the beginning of World War II.

This service is open to the public and will be held at the VFW Post Memorial Home at 479 South Ave. E. in Cranford. The program will last approximately a half hour. In the event of

inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved indoors at the Post. After the service a buffet breakfast will be served in the hall upstairs.

Featured at the service will be the VFW Color Guard, and a bugler to solemnly play taps, as well as a taped recorded playing of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous "date which will live in infamy" radio address.

For additional info, please call 908-482-0132 or visit the Post website at vfw335.org.

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MEET 1ST LIEUTENANT JOHN “JACK” PRESCOTT, WWII NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON PILOT

Written and researched by Don Sweeney and Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault Additional research by Stu Rosenthal, Barry Mazza, and Vic Bary

In 1937, young John Prescott entered the doors of Cranford's newly constructed high school on West End Place. As part of the rising class of 1941, John was a member of the first freshman class of students who would spend all four years in this brand new, state of the art high school. Little did anyone know that John and many of his classmates would soon be called upon to defend our nation against the fascist regimes which threatened global freedom. Tragically, the fates of John Prescott and four of his fellow freshman classmates would forever be bound together in the sacred brotherhood which we now call the Cranford 86.

REACHING FOR THE SKIES

John Prescott, or “Jack” as he was known, was an ambitious, active student involved in a broad array of activities. His athletic endeavors included participation in the football, baseball, track and hockey teams. In the 1941 yearbook, his future plans simply stated “College”. After graduation from Cranford High School, it seemed that everything was moving along as planned for 18-year-old Jack Prescott, as he was accepted and began his studies at the University of Maryland. But, just three months into his freshman year, on December 7th, 1941, the world was turned upside down. The Japanese Imperial Navy Air Service launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, and the United States was at war. Jack Prescott finished his first year of college and like so many others of this unique generation, chose to join the U.S. Armed Forces. His sights were set on becoming a United States Army Air Force (USAAF) pilot.

At the time, the United States had allowed its arsenal of war hardware to become antiquated. To rectify this, American manufacturing plants were adapted and went into high gear to produce 300,000 aircraft in a four-year period, an historically epic feat. The Army Air Force recruited from colleges, cities and towns across the country, off the farm, or just off the street. Successfully obtaining and training enough personnel to man all of these airplanes that were

coming off the line is an incredible story to be told here through the experiences of Jack Prescott.

We would love to know what drove young Jack to pursue such a lofty career choice, one that just a year earlier would not have yet been possible for him. Prior to 1942, aviator applicants were required to be 20 years of age and needed to have completed two years of college. In January of 1942, reacting to the urgent need for flight crews, the Army reduced the applicant age by two years, the college prerequisite was eliminated and replaced with a rigorous written examination. Apparently, Jack Prescott tackled the entrance exam with little or no problem, and on June 27th, 1942, he reported for duty at Fort Dix, New Jersey, as an Aviation Cadet. It was right around this time that the USAAF began its program to train American pilots for night flying, to assist the British squadrons that were currently fighting to obtain night air superiority for the Allies. This early in his career, Jack was maybe wondering if he even had what it took to get his wings, not realizing that he was destined to become a special breed of aviator, known as a night fighter.

PREFLIGHT TRAINING

Jack began the demanding journey to attaining his pilot's wings at Preflight school in Santa Ana, California. It is here where a classification board determined whether an applicant had the aptitude for the job they had selected: pilot, navigator or bombardier, or would be classified as “none of the above”. Hand sensitivity, eyesight, and adaptable reactions were some of the characteristics which were probed by intense testing of complex coordination, reaction time, finger dexterity, steadiness and rotary pursuit, to name a few. One veteran pilot stated that in his class, 40% “washed out” (were eliminated) during the classification process, placed into the none of the above category, and went on to less demanding jobs. Conquering another sizeable obstacle, Jack's test results allowed him to be

classified for pilot training.

An article from the Cranford Chronicle archives told us that Jack Prescott found a familiar face in his Preflight training class, Bruce Nostrand, a fellow Cranford resident. Bruce and Jack attended Preflight training together, which was half classwork and half outdoor military training. The men studied aerodynamics, military customs and courtesies, aviation physiology, navigation, Morse code, aircraft and naval recognition, math, physics, chart interpretation and more. It was said that another large percentage of washouts occurred here, due to lack of aptitude for any subject that was physics related and surprisingly, Morse code. Outdoor training consisted of shooting and studying all types of hand weaponry, rigorous physical fitness and endless marching drills, in all of which, perfection was constantly sought.

FLIGHT SIMULATORS, SOLOS AND MORE

In early 1943, after successful completion of Preflight School, Jack Prescott and Bruce Nostrand together moved on to Fort Stockton, Texas for the next round of training and tests and finally, what they had all been waiting for... planes. We are not sure if either of these two Aviation Cadets from Cranford had ever even been near an aircraft before, as was the case with many of their fellow trainees. However, here in Primary School at Fort Stockton they would fly trainer aircraft, take their first solo flight and begin to become proficient in the art and skills of a battle bound pilot.

At night and in bad weather, pilots needed to know how to fly using instrumentation. A man from Binghamton, New York named Ed Link, whose father owned a piano and organ manufacturing company, was the inventor of the “Link Trainer”. With his knowledge of pumps, bellows and valves, which he gained from his family's business, Ed created a flight simulator that responded to a pilot's controls and provided the correct corresponding readings on its

(continued on page 12)

restoration courtesy of the Cranford 86 team.



*Jack's home in Cranford,
4 Doering Way, as of 2024.*



*The shining faces of two brothers,
Jack and his younger brother Charles.*



*Jack Prescott entered Cranford's
brand new high school in 1937.*



*“Jack's senior photo from
Cranford's Golden C yearbook*

1ST LIEUTENANT JOHN “JACK” PRESCOTT (continued from page 11)

instruments. In WWII, countless numbers of U.S. pilots were safely schooled on Link Trainers, another example of American ingenuity that helped to achieve victory and save lives.

In Primary School, the pressure to achieve readiness and complete a solo flight in the required timeframe was immense, and missing that goal would result in washing out. Despite this, and their demanding course and flying schedules, the cadets did have some time for weekend socialization. It was during this time that Jack met and fell in love with a young lady from Galveston, Texas, named Anna Tennant, a graduate of Sul Ross State Teachers College (now Sul Ross State University). In a whirlwind romance, the couple’s engagement was announced in May of 1943, but considering the circumstances, a wedding date was not set. What a full and exciting time of life this was for Jack Prescott.

Flight crews advanced from Primary to Basic to Advanced Training, each at a new air base with more challenging instructors and larger, faster and more powerful aircraft. Instead of sitting in the rear seat, they were now situated up front. As the weeks went by, the cadets struggled to keep their heads above water and lived in daily fear of washing out. They watched their class size shrink by large percentages, which was evident when they lined up out on the parade field, and many felt that pilot’s wings were perhaps an unattainable goal.

JACK GETS HIS WINGS

In Advanced School at Williams Field in Arizona, the training and testing continued and would reveal any physical, emotional or mental tells which might prevent a cadet from performing at the highest level needed to lead a flight crew. Cadets proceeded on to live action exercises which made the rigorous hurdles of simulated training look pale in comparison. Here, flying in formation was constantly practiced and perfected and this skill was an absolute requirement for a fighter pilot. Jack Prescott forged ahead, met every challenge and was successfully commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. Finally, in a graduation ceremony in July of 1943, at Williams Field, he was awarded his silver wings and pilot certification. A WWII veteran described graduation day as the crowning moment in a military pilot’s life.

NIGHT FIGHTERS - A SPECIAL BREED OF AVIATOR

Jack continued with additional advanced training and in October of 1943, on his way to Orlando, Florida, he was able to make a surprise visit home to Cranford. He had not been home for 16 months and was now walking through the door of 4 Doering Way as a U.S. Army Air Force pilot. In Orlando, Jack would attend the Fighter Command School, Night Fighter Division, AAF School of Applied Tactics. The role of night fighter was a difficult and dangerous assignment, so much so, that it was staffed by volunteers only. The excitement of the mission appealed to many, one of those being Jack Prescott. Already a highly-trained airman, Jack went on to master

twin-engine flying, night formation flying, night gunnery, night recognition, night navigation, ground control radar, and blind landings. He was assigned to the newly formed 414th Night Fighter Squadron (known as the four-one-four in military terminology) that was based in the Algerian capital city of Algiers. In early 1944, Jack traveled to Hammer Field in Fresno, California to train with his squadron.

We were so fortunate to locate members of the Prescott family, who reside in Massachusetts. Jack’s niece, Betty Prescott Gray, told us that before heading off to his assignment in Algeria, her uncle broke off his engagement to Anna Tennant. She explained to us that this was an act of compassion as her uncle so loved Anna. Jack, knowing the odds, did not want to leave Anna as a widow in the likely case that he may not return from war. In some fighter and bomber units, only one in four would survive, a 75% mortality average, unlike other units that had less than a 10% expected mortality rate. Jack and Anna remained a couple throughout Jack’s term of service and hopefully he lived in her heart long beyond that. The 414th Night Fighter Squadron ended up losing 25 airmen and had one POW by war’s end.

Embarking on his first overseas assignment, our Cranford 86 hero flew himself to Algeria, in North Africa, in May of 1944. His squadron was used in a variety of combat missions which included reconnaissance, protection of allied traffic in the Mediterranean Sea, ground strafing attacks and psychological warfare efforts in which leaflets were dropped from above, encouraging surrender of enemy forces. The squadrons would be moved gradually north to the large islands of Sardinia and Corsica, located off the west coast of Italy, in the Mediterranean Sea. Sardinia and Corsica were both strongholds

for the Nazis earlier in the war. Control of these two islands gave military superiority due to their proximity to northern Italy and southern France. Allied successes in battle would move the squadrons from Sicily, north to Salerno, then Anzio, and then further up the Italian peninsula. After the Allied forces were able to repair the island airstrips that were destroyed by the retreating Nazi forces, air support could be set up for the advancing Allied troops in France for the invasion of D-Day on June 6th, 1944 and the continued advance of battling forces in Italy.

The concept of night bombing was not the norm for the U.S. Army Air Force. American-made aircraft were not designed for flying in the dark of night. In the war drama, Masters of the Air, there was a memorable scene where British and American pilots were talking over drinks at the Officers’ Club. The British pilots were mocking the Americans for their plan to head out daily over enemy territory, in broad daylight, a strategy deemed crazy by the British. The Americans typically performed precision bombing visually, utilizing the Norden bombsight, instead of wide range night attacks using radar. Inspired by those scenes, we researched the facts and found them to be mostly true. The Americans had attempted night bombing and strafing attacks for a short period, only to suffer greater losses than in day raids. This nonsuccess was due to the lack of equipment necessary for night flying, such as lighted control panels in the cockpit and flash guards on guns. These were features that could be found in the English-made Bristol Beaufighter aircraft.

The four American night fighter squadrons that were first based in North Africa were the 414th, 415th, 416th, and 417th and were

(continued on page 13)



(above) Jack's pilot's spirit is quite evident in this charming photo provided to us by the Prescott family.



(right) Five foot 10 inch 1st Lieutenant Jack Prescott salutes while modelling his new custom made dress uniform before heading to the Army Advanced Flying School Graduation.



Looking so much wiser and more mature than his 21 years, this portrait appeared in Jack's obituary in the Cranford

1ST LIEUTENANT JOHN "JACK" PRESCOTT (continued from page 12)

equipped exclusively with the Bristol Beaufighter aircraft. Over 100 "Beaus" were manufactured for the USAAF by Britain and it was considered the most fortified and well-armed airplane of its time. The Beaufighter only had 2 seats, one for the pilot and directly behind, under a glass dome, was the navigator/radar operator seat. The pilot would need to fly the plane and control the .303 caliber wing-mounted machine guns and the four 20mm explosive shell cannons that were mounted on both sides of the fuselage. The Beaufighter was converted from the Bristol Beaufort torpedo bomber and the nose, formerly glass, now housed its massive early generation radar unit. Its increased size and weight required an upgrade from two smaller 1,000 horsepower engines to two huge 1,500 horsepower Rolls Royce or Hercules engines. This made takeoffs and landings a difficult and acquired skill set. The Beaufighter had a maximum speed of 335 mph. It was not considered fast for a fighter plane, but it was fast enough to keep up with and attack slightly slower bomber aircraft. Its long range of 1,750 miles and ability to fly successfully in the dark of night, were Beaufighter traits that made it the right aircraft for the long two-way missions over the Mediterranean Sea to the Italian peninsula and the European mainland.

TRAGEDY STRIKES

Jack was promoted in September of 1944 to 1st Lieutenant. Shortly after, on September 25th, he was on a mission indicative of the skill level

to which our hero had risen. In an expert low-flying strafing attack that left his targets in flames, he successfully neutralized a traveling convoy of supply trucks and destroyed a key railroad station in the western Po River Valley. The Po River is the longest river in Italy. It runs east to west across the northern Italian industrial manufacturing region, an area which was crucial to the Nazi war machine during WWII. A couple weeks later in early October of 1944, Jack was in contact with his parents and he reported to them that he had completed 25 missions and was doing well. Had Jack accomplished this in 1943, successfully completing 25 missions would have sent a U.S. Army Air Force flight crew member home. Unfortunately, by 1944 that number had been raised to 30, and further increased to 50 in 1945.

On October 12th, 1944, Jack was returning from a reconnaissance mission which again had taken him over the Po River Valley. At 5:10 a.m., just after sunrise, he contacted the Corsica air base control tower. With no indication of trouble, Jack indicated that he was at 9,500 feet and was coming in to land. That was his last communication and his plane never landed. In a letter from his Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Carroll H. Bolender, to Clifton and Clarice Prescott, Jack's parents, it stated that every aircraft on the Corsica home base was dispatched to conduct a thorough search and rescue mission. An oil slick was sighted, and a wing section and other scattered plane parts were

recovered from a debris field, off the northern tip of Corsica in the Ligurian Sea. 1st Lieutenant John A. Prescott, pilot of a British Beaufighter, and his navigator and radar operator, Samuel G. Danforth, were reported missing in action, preliminarily, as hopes were still being held for a possible ejection and recovery. After 30 days, sadly, both were redesignated as killed in action. It seems impossible that, after all Jack Prescott had achieved, he was only 21 years old at the time of his death.

Born on May 10, 1923, Jack Prescott was a native of Oak Park, Illinois. He resided in Cranford for 17 years at 4 Doering Way. In addition to his parents, he was survived by his brother Charles who was a senior at Cranford High School at that time. His former fiancée Anna Tennant eventually married and had three children. His brother Charles later married and had 7 children, with the first born son named after Jack. The family of Charles Prescott was able to provide us with a wonderful collection of photographs, mostly containing happy moments captured within the 21 years of Jack Prescott's short, but meaningful life.

Jack Prescott was a kid from Cranford with a dream to elevate himself into a position where he felt that he could best serve the world in the most critical of times. To get there, he triumphed over every test that was put before him and he flew up into the darkness, again and again, giving more than his share to our country and its allies. Lt. Jack Prescott's story is one of determination, gallantry and bravery and we are honored to be the ones to tell it.

After Jack was declared killed in action, a memorial service was conducted at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford by Rev. William R. Sloan. In a special ceremony at the Officers' Club in Weequahic Park Barracks, Newark, 1st Lieutenant John A. Prescott was

(continued on page 14)



Jack, 5'10" tall, 155 lbs, proudly stands in front of his "Beaufighter" with his navigator Samuel G. Danforth in August of 1944.



Jack and Samuel (Sam) G. Danforth hanging out in Sardinia in August 1944.



In Rome, after its liberation, Jack (2nd from left) and his fellow pilots relax with drinks in hand, forgetting about combat for the time being. This photo was taken at "Broadway Bill's", a night club-styled officers' club, which was described as "quite a dump".



Gibbs Field at Fort Stockton had a mascot living at the airbase! Cadets had to plant a kiss on this donkey, aptly named "Solo", upon completion of their first solo flight.



This map shows the flight path of Jack's final mission on October 12th, 1944 from Borgo, Corsica to the Po River Valley and shows the perspective of the battle theater that he served through out his deployment abroad.

1ST LIEUTENANT JOHN "JACK" PRESCOTT (continued from page 13)



Newly engaged Jack Prescott and Anna Tennant near Williams Field Air Force Base,

posthumously awarded the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster. It was presented to his parents by Major Aubrey C. Halsell, Chaplain of the Atlantic Overseas Air Tactical Service Command, for the aforementioned strafing attack in the Po River Valley on September 25, 1944. Lt. Prescott also received the Purple Heart.

1st Lieutenant Bruce Nostrand also completed his advanced training, received his wings, and piloted a Boston Bomber in combat, based in the Philippines. Touchingly, Bruce's name would join Jack's on the bronze plaque at Cranford's Memorial Park, along with Jack's four classmates from Cranford High School Class of 1941: Norman Sorger, Roderick Smith, Nick Vassallo and Robert Tuttle.

Our decision to create a theme for this year's Cranford 86 stories, was inspired by Apple TV's Masters of the Air, a nine-part mini-series that chronicles the "Bloody 100th" Bomb Group during WWII. Incredibly, amongst Cranford's 86 plus fallen heroes, there are 13 flight crew members, of which 9 were graduated pilots. Now, with the understanding of what was required to reach that level, a new light shines on the caliber of skill, character and endurance possessed by the fine young men of our little suburban New Jersey town. Cranford delivered its very best to a country in need.

Many thanks to the Prescott family, for

providing us with the beautiful family photos, which have given a face to the name "Lieutenant Jack Prescott". We look forward to the pleasure of their company in Cranford, for Memorial Day 2025 when Lt. Prescott's banner will be unveiled. Additional thanks go to Cranford residents Rich and Amy Wischusen, for their sponsorship of the lieutenant's banner.

For some added perspective on the beginnings of radar guided night flying, we recommend our Cranford 86 profile of Navy pilot Gene McGarry at Cranford86.org.

For an historic presentation from a graduate of the pilot training process from Jack Prescott's era, see the link in the online version of this story at Cranford86.org.



Scan the QR code to view additional photos and videos of Jack's story on the Cranford 86 website.

CRANFORD VFW HOSTS ARMY NAVY GAME


The Cranford Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 335 invites the public to attend a watch party in support of the Post fund drive for the renovations in Cranford's Memorial Park. Every December America is treated to the greatest sports event this

country holds, the Army Navy game. This year the game is in its 125th year and will be played at FedEx field in Virginia. The event is open to anyone and provides an opportunity to experience the game with veterans. Each ticket

costs \$20 and includes a great food buffet. Drink specials will be available and local distiller Tree City will have specialty drinks to celebrate the event. For more information visit the Cranford VFW website vfw335.org.


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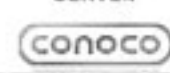





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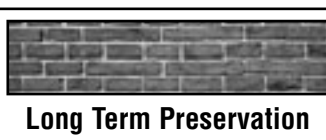
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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS HOUSE TOUR - DEC 8

PROJECT HOME YEARS OF HELPING CFC

Cranford Family Care (CFC) may have begun during the Great Depression, but it doesn't take a nationwide crisis for someone to find themselves in need of its services. A health problem, a job loss, a flood, or other crises can cause an unexpected financial emergency. CFC helps Cranford residents by offering food, as well as short-term financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments.

For more than 30 years, Project Home of Cranford has helped CFC keep Cranford families in their homes. "In 2023, Project Home gave \$41,000 to CFC for rent and mortgage assistance, which is money that would otherwise come from their budget," said President Lisa Orrico. "This allows CFC to use their funds to aid Cranford families in other ways." Project Home's small but effective team helps with CFC's day-to-day needs by helping stock shelves at the pantry and pick up donations.

Project Home raises money through donations and fundraisers such as Ladies Night Out, the Town-Wide Garage Sale, and the Dunk-a-Cop during National Night Out. Every dollar it raises or donation the Project Home receives goes toward the annual pledge that enables Cranford Family Care to continue helping residents in need. Anyone interested in donating to project home may learn more at projecthomeofcranford.org/donate.

Celebrating its Diamond Jubilee, the Cranford Woman's Club (CWC) proudly announces the Home for the Holidays House Tour, in its 35th year, with seven beautifully decorated historic homes will take place on Sunday, December 8, from 12 to 4 p.m. This self-directed tour showcases homes lovingly adorned for the holidays, each offering a unique glimpse into Cranford's rich architectural heritage.

Homeowners are thrilled to share their festive spaces, including Barbara Notarile, who expressed, "We are excited and honored to have our restored 1890 Farmer's Greek Revival Victorian home included in this year's Holiday Tour!" Another homeowner, Lynn Torrico, added, "We are excited to share our early 1900s Victorian-style home, rich in Cranford history, decorated in a Winter Wonderland theme for the holidays." At each stop, knowledgeable volunteers will guide attendees, sharing historical insights and unique features of each property.

"As the Cranford Woman's Club celebrates its 75th anniversary, and the 35th year of the Holiday House Tour," said Kendall O'Brien, Home Tour Co-Chair and former Club President. "This event is a vital fundraiser supporting scholarships, Cranford Family Care, and our other philanthropic beneficiaries. We deeply appreciate our homeowners for helping us make this community event possible."

Tickets, priced at \$50, will be available online via Zeffy, the Cranford Woman's Club (CWC) Facebook page starting November 8 and in the Cranford Library. As a special bonus, the first 200 tickets sold will include a \$5 gift card redeemable



at select Cranford Downtown merchants, and 11 Cranford restaurants will offer a 10% discount to ticket holders on the day of the tour.

ABOUT THE CRANFORD WOMAN'S CLUB:

Founded in 1949, the Cranford Woman's Club is a volunteer organization deeply committed to giving back to the community. Last year, the club donated over \$35,000 in cash and goods to local causes, including scholarships for graduating Cranford seniors. The Holiday House Tour is the club's largest annual fundraiser.

The Cranford Woman's Club also hosts several major events, including Witches Night Out, Sip N Shop, and the Leprechaun Lunch. The club's philanthropic efforts focus on supporting Cranford-based organizations such as Project Home, Cranford Family Care, the Cranford First Aid Squad, and FLAG.

The club meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the VFW on South Avenue, and all are welcome to attend.

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WINTER REC PROGRAMS

Registration for Cranford's Winter 2024/25 recreation programs is now open. This includes special youth programs to keep kids engaged during winter break. Register on Community Pass or visit the Community Center to register in person. To register online, login on Community

Pass at register.communitypass.net/cranford. For more information, please see the recreation brochure online at cranfordrecreation.org, visit the Community Center or email: recreation@cranfordnj.org, or call 908-709-7283.

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SEAN SAWYER NAMED PRINCIPAL OF LINCOLN SCHOOL

The Cranford Board of Education is pleased to announce Sean Sawyer as the new principal of Lincoln School, effective January 1, 2025. Mr. Sawyer was selected after an extensive search process which included multiple interviews with the selection committee; reviews of work samples; and a very thorough reference check.

Mr. Sawyer, will be succeeding Mr. Dennis McCaffery, who is retiring effective January 1, 2025, after serving as Lincoln School principal for the past 20 years, following 10 additional years of service in Cranford. We are very appreciative of Mr. McCaffery's passion and commitment in service to our school community and wish him much deserved happiness as he starts this new and exciting chapter in his life.

Sean Sawyer has served in several roles in

education since April of 1996. Mr. Sawyer began his career in the East Orange School District where he worked as a substitute teacher, 5th grade teacher, and Dean of Students. As an administrator, he led efforts to improve and enhance school culture and academic performance. He then took his leadership skills to University Academy Charter High School in Jersey City where he served as the assistant principal for fifteen years. Among his many accomplishments, he was instrumental in the development of a freshman academy that provided transitional guidance, mentoring and support for students. Prior to his appointment in Cranford, Sean Sawyer served as the middle school principal of the Community Charter School of Paterson.

Mr. Sawyer earned a Bachelor of Science in

Marketing from Morgan State University and a Masters of Arts in Educational Administration from New Jersey City University. Currently he is a doctoral candidate at Kean University.

Sean Sawyer has greatly enjoyed the opportunity to positively impact the students and families of East Orange, Jersey City, and Paterson. He is appreciative of the relationships he has made and the partnerships he has built with the faculty, students, and parents/guardians.

Mr. Sawyer is honored to be joining the Cranford School District as the principal of Lincoln School. He looks forward to partnering with the dedicated staff, parents/guardians, students, and the community to see how he can best serve the school and ensure a successful year for all students.

TAC-1 SPECIAL OPS AUTO GETS A MAKEOVER

Cranford Fire Department

Joe O'Neill, the owner of Benner's Auto Body in Cranford, donated a paint job to the Cranford Fire Department Special Operations vehicle (TAC-1). This vehicle will be used as a much-needed utility vehicle and will be used during

fires, floods, Township sanctioned special events, and for other emergency incidents. TAC-1 once served as one of our ambulances, but was repurposed after it was involved in a motor vehicle accident and was replaced by a new ambulance in 2021.



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Hours: Monday–Thursday 10am–9pm, Friday 10am–5pm, Saturday 10am–5pm, Sunday Closed

1:1 Senior Tech Help Appointments

Tuesdays starting at 1pm

Have questions about your smartphone, tablet, or other device? Register for a 15-minute tech help appointment with a librarian. Register online or contact the library. Appointments are weekly on Tuesdays from 1-2:30pm at the Cranford Community Center.

Romance Readers Book Club

Monday, December 2, at 7pm

Join us for December's Romance Readers Book Club. This month we've decided to read Thank you for Listening by Julia Whelan. If you don't want to read that book, feel free to come anyway to discuss whichever romance you've recently read.

Wednesday Morning Adult Craft

Wednesday, December 4, at 10am

Join us in the teen zone for a new monthly adult craft program on Wednesday mornings! Today we are making folded book trees and hearts. Registration recommended.

Movie Night

Wednesday, December 4, at 7pm

Join us the first Wednesday of the month for a screening of a recently released DVD! Visit our website or contact the library for film titles.

Raconteur Radio Presents a Christmas Carol

Thursday, December 5, at 7pm

Join us for a live reading adapted from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol presented by Raconteur Radio. Named "One of the "7 best things to do in New Jersey" by The Star Ledger, Raconteur Radio stages theatrical presentations of vintage radio plays, classic works of literature, and pop culture parodies for live audiences in a variety of venues throughout the Tri-State area. No registration.

Cookbook Club Cookie Swap

Monday, December 9, at 6:30

This month the cookbook club will do a cookie swap! Make enough of your favorite cookie recipe for everyone registered. The maximum number of participants is 24. Please visit our website to register for this event.

International Film

Monday, December 9, at 2pm and 7pm

Join us for an International film screening. The same film will be shown at 2pm and 7pm. Please contact the library for the film title.

Adults Create

Tuesday, December 10, at 17pm

This month we are painting snowmen and other fun decorations on recycled keys. We will have keys but feel free to bring your own that you no longer need. Space is limited; please visit our website to register. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library.

Lit Cafe

Saturday, December 14, at 10:15am

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. Admission is free and all are welcome. Light refreshments provided by the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. Attend in person or on Zoom (contact library for link).

Readers Forum

Monday, December 16, at 7pm

All are welcome at the Readers Forum monthly book club! Additional copies of the book to check out are available at the Circulation Desk. This month's book is: The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa (2003)

Trivia Night

Wednesday, December 18, at 7pm

Join us for another fun evening of trivia! 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.

Adult Grab & Go Craft Kit

Wednesday, December 18

Stop by the library and pick up this month's adult craft! This month you will be making a quilled snowflake card. Thanks to the Friends of the Cranford Public Library for sponsoring this monthly program! While supplies last.



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FULFILL WISH LISTS OF FOSTER CHILDREN

Child Focus

As the holiday season approaches, Child Focus, the nonprofit child advocacy organization that runs Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Passaic and Union Counties, is thrilled to announce the launch of its annual Holiday Wish List Drive. This initiative aims to bring joy and personalized gifts to more than 400 children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect, honoring their unique interests and wishes this holiday season. The holidays can be especially difficult for those involved in the child welfare system, and this drive seeks to ensure each child feels seen, valued, and celebrated.

Child Focus invites community members, organizations, and businesses to support the drive by purchasing items directly from its Amazon Wish List, donating gift cards to popular retailers such as Target, Amazon, Walmart, Macy's, Old Navy, and Sephora, or contacting Child Focus directly to learn what specific items are needed this year. All gifts must be new, unwrapped, and delivered to the Child Focus offices in Wayne or Elizabeth by Monday, December 9.

"The holiday wish list drive is always a bright spot in our programming, as our community comes together to make wishes come true for these children who have experienced so much turmoil in their young lives," stated Child Focus Executive Director,

Erica Fischer-Kaslander. "It is an important reminder that a small act of kindness can have an incredible impact in a young person's life. We are grateful for our community partners who have stepped up year after year, including those who have been willing to scour the internet and pound the pavement to locate some of those special gifts, injecting some much-needed holiday magic into the lives of these deserving children."

Child Focus thanks the community partners who continually step up to make wishes come true for hundreds of children in foster care.

For more information on the Holiday Wish List Drive, including a link to the Amazon Wish List, or to learn how you can become a CASA volunteer, please visit childfocusnj.org or call (973) 832-4002.

ABOUT CHILD FOCUS:

Child Focus prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect by amplifying their voices and working toward lasting, permanent solutions that address their unique situations and provide support needed to thrive. This critical work is accomplished through three distinct but complementary programs: CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, NJ Safe Babies Court Team, and the Open Door Store.

For more information about Child Focus, visit childfocusnj.org.

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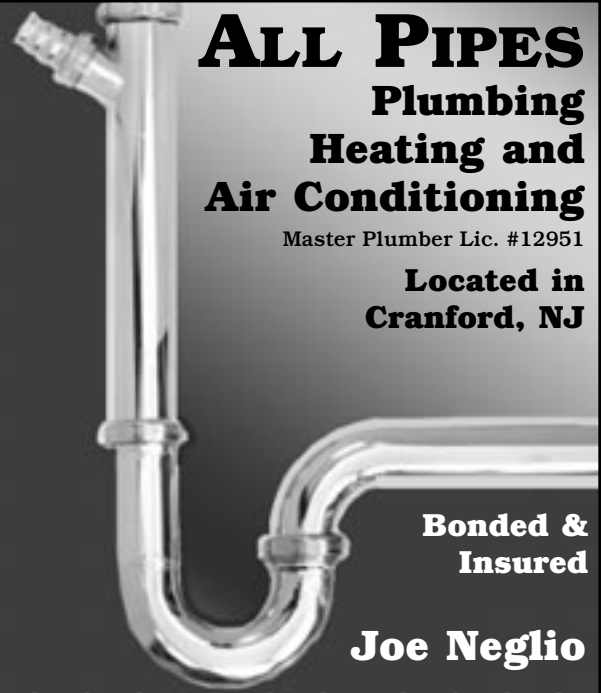
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BOSOM BUDDIES ANNUAL DINNER

The Bosom Buddies of NJ is a Cranford nonprofit that provides support for residents battling cancer. They are a group of women who

have connected, bonded and supported each other through their journeys. The group was founded by 5 breast cancer survivors. They held

their annual dinner in October. For more information, find them on Facebook @ The Bosom Buddies of NJ.



Photos by Andrew Feldman



10TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY HOUSE DECORATING CONTEST

The Cranford Recreation and Parks Department is accepting entries for its 10th Annual Holiday House Decorating Contest. Winners will be judged in the following categories: Most Outrageous, Most Traditional, Most Creative, Most Elegant, All Around Favorite, and Fan Favorite.

Prizes will consist of a gift certificate to a local establishment, as well as a lawn sign to let everyone know that you are a winner.

A committee will vote on the winners except Fan Favorite, which will be decided on by you, the Cranford residents.

Judging will take place the week of December 16. Winners will be announced by week's end.

Entries must be submitted by Friday, December 13. To enter, please email completed entry form and a picture of your decorated home to: recreation@cranfordnj.org. Forms can be found on the Recreation and Parks website, cranfordrecreation.org.



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Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce Holiday Events

Friday, November 29 - Town Tree Lighting
5:00 - 6:00 pm - Caroling
6:00 - Tree Lighting
6:15pm - ? - Pictures with Santa

Saturday, December 21 - Trolley Rides with Santa
1:00 - 3:00 pm - Sing Along with Santa
The last chance to line up will be at 3:00pm, there will be no exceptions.

Sunday, December 8, 15, 22 - Stories with Santa
Join us on the Cranford Chamber Facebook page as Santa Claus goes online to read bedtime stories for the local boys and girls.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas filled with love, laughter, and unforgettable moments.
The Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce



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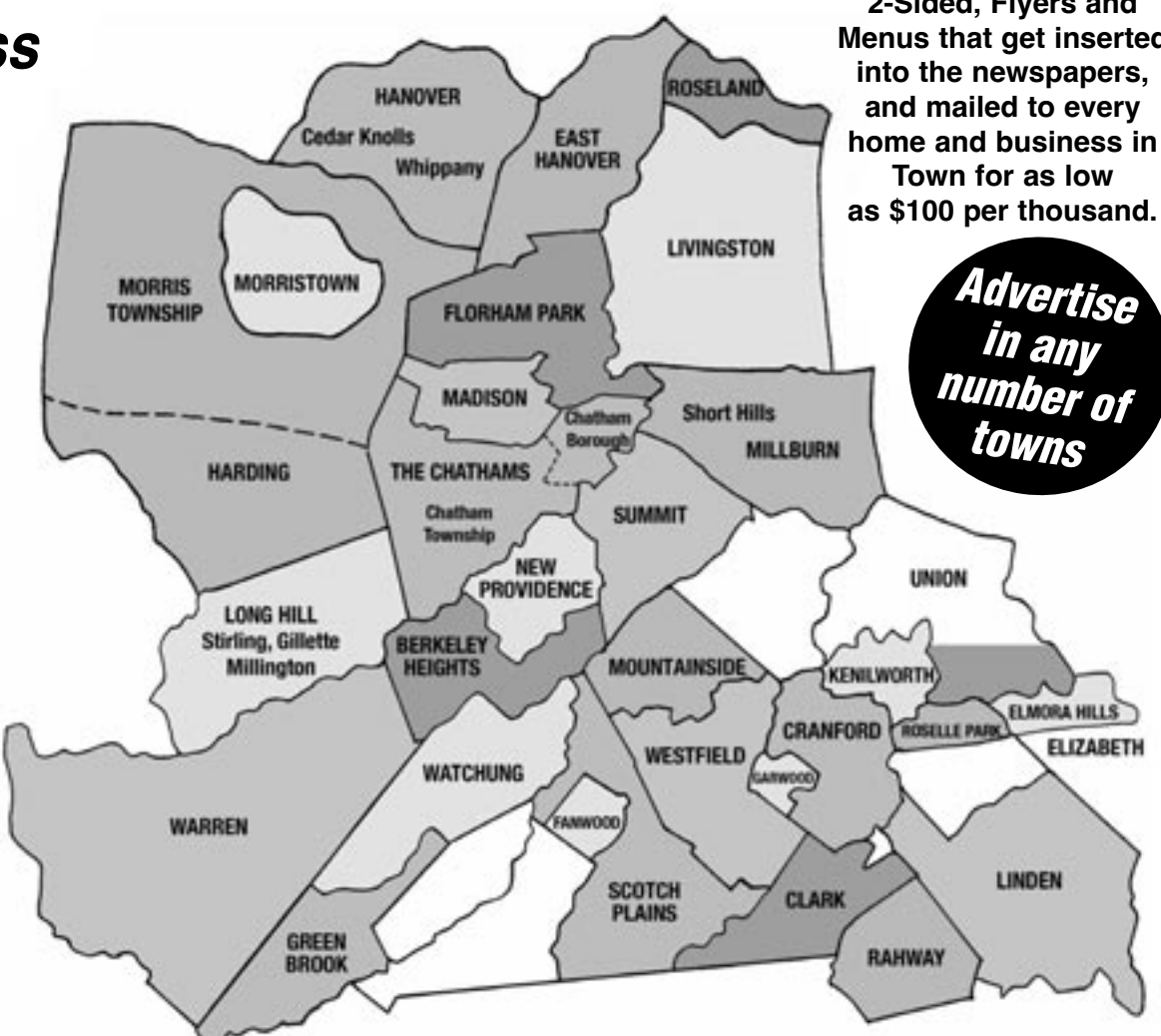
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Long Hill LEADER NJ Qty: 3,500 Zips: 07933, 07946, 07980	MADISON MONTHLY NJ Qty: 6,300 Zip: 07940	Short Hills MILLBURN MONTHLY NJ Qty: 8,200 Zips: 07041, 07078	MORRIS TOWNSHIP TIMES NJ Qty: 13,500 Zip: 07960, Harding 07976	MORRISTOWN MONTHLY NJ Qty: 7,000 Zip: 07960	MOUNTAINSIDE VIEW NJ Qty: 3,000 Zip: 07092	New Providence NEWS NJ Qty: 5,100 Zip: 07974	OUR TOWN Rahway, NJ NJ Qty: 13,100 Zip: 07065
Life in Roseland NJ Qty: 3,000 Zip: 07068	ROSELLE PARK MONTHLY NJ Qty: 5,600 Zip: 07204	Scotch Plains NJ WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY Qty: 9,600 Zip: 07076	Summit Times NJ Qty: 9,600 Zip: 07901	Spirit of UNION NJ Qty: 7,800 Zip: 07083 (partial)	WARREN MONTHLY NJ Qty: 6,500 Zip: 07059	Watchung Post NJ Qty: 2,700 Zip: 07069	Westfield MONTHLY NJ Qty: 12,000 Zip: 07090

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4 Units	3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"	240	560	900	1000	1300	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100
6 Units	6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
12 Units	6.5"x14"	400	960	1400	1800	2100	2400	2700	3000	3300	3600	3900
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