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COLDWELL BANKER





OSTAL PATRON RANFORD, NJ 0701

8TH ANNUAL TRIVIA NIGHT RAISES \$30K

Cranford Fund for Educational Excellence

The 8th Annual Trivia Night, held on February 22, 2025, at the Kenilworth VFW, and organized by the Cranford Fund for Educational Excellence (CFEE) raised \$30,000 to benefit Cranford public school students, thanks to the support of sponsors as well as parents and community members who took part in the lively event.

More than 250 people attended Trivia Night, with 27 teams competing and E34 Events providing the musical backdrop for the high-spirited contest. It was an evening of laughter, elation, high-fives, hugs, and, toward the end of the evening, dancing in the aisles.

All proceeds from the event will be awarded as grants for the 2025- '26 school year to Cranford teachers who are seeking new ways to engage and educate their students. CFEE grants have funded everything from robotics and 3D printers to math learning kits, website access, STEM education tools, and more.

"When I think of Cranford, this is what I think about people coming together for the common good to help support each other," said Cranford schools superintendent Dr. Scott Rubin, addressing the crowd at the event. "Give yourselves a nice round of applause for helping to support [CFEE's efforts]," he added.

Since 2016, CFEE has awarded more than \$350,000 in grants in categories such as differentiated or personalized education, technology integration and 21st-century skills, innovation zones/makerspaces, and classroom design. If you'd like more information or would like to contribute to CFEE's efforts, please visit cranfordfund.org.

Thank you to all teams for participating, and congratulations to our winners!



(above) Board Members of the Cranford Fund for Educational Excellence

Courtesy photo



CRANFORD MONTHLYNJ

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FIREFIGHTERS COMPETE AT FOOD FESTIVAL

On Monday, February 24, 2025, Cranford firefighters joined together with firefighters from around New Jersey to compete in The Ultimate Fire Department Cook-off, part of the Cooked and Uncorked Food and Wine Festival.

The event benefited the New Jersey State Firefighter's Mutual Benevolent Association and The Burn Center at Saint Barnabas Medical Center.

The Fire Department Cook-off is part of a culinary extravaganza where participants were able to experience the tastes and flavors of some of New Jersey's finest restaurants, caterers and dessert shops all in one location.



(above) Cranford Fire Department Team: Brad Bisset, Tom Hannen, and John Dillon

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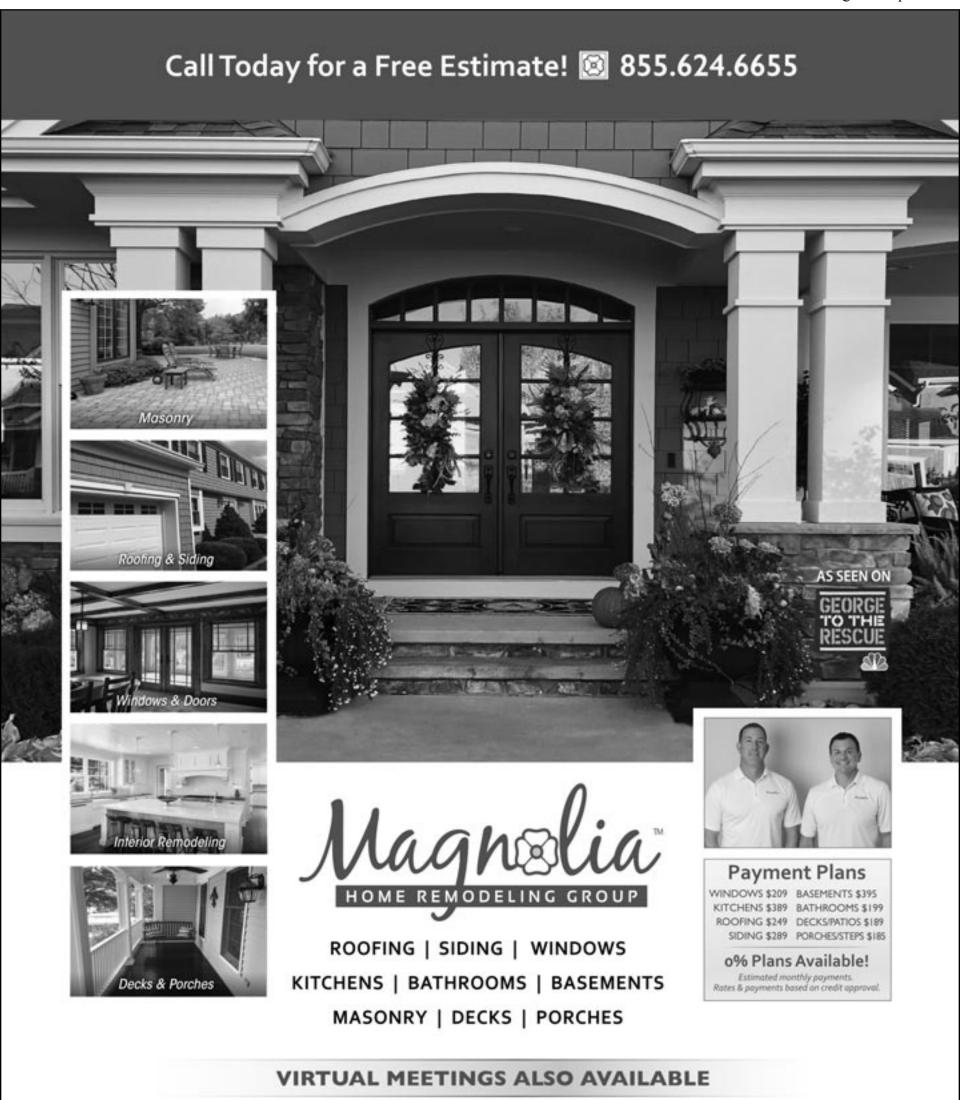
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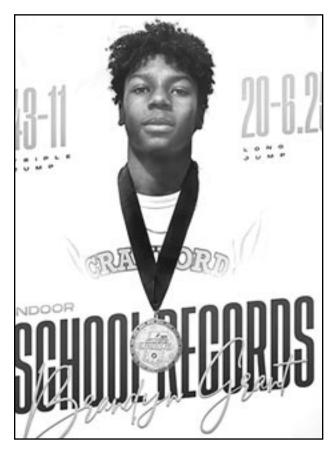


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(above) The girls' 4x800-meter relay team, comprised of seniors Ellie Semple and Caitlin Owens, freshman Anna Klapinski, and sophomore Claire Kelly.



RECORDS SHATTERED AS CRANFORD RUNNERS & JUMPERS SHINE

Cranford High School Track & Field Team

The Cranford High School Track & Field team made history on Valentine's Day at the Garden State Invitational at Ocean Breeze, setting multiple indoor school records in an electrifying performance.

The girls' 4x800-meter relay team, comprised of seniors Ellie Semple and Caitlin Owens, freshman Anna Klapinski, and sophomore Claire Kelly, delivered a remarkable performance, crushing the previous school record by nearly 10 seconds. Their blistering time of 9:53.28 not only secured their place in Cranford's history books but also qualified them for Nike Indoor Nationals and the Eastern State Championships.

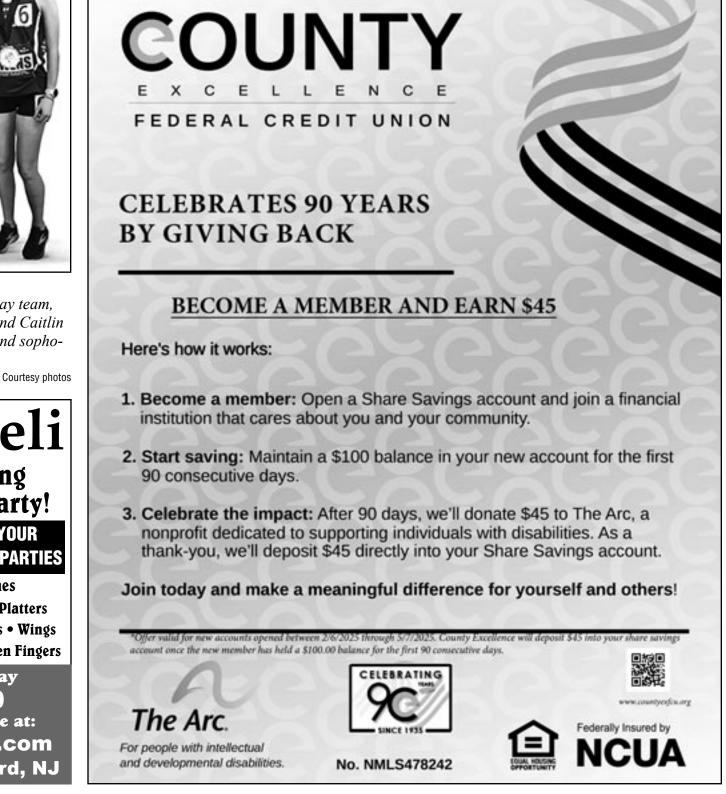
The previous record, set in 2015 by Anna Fitch, Katie Romanovich, Kiera Hurley, and Megan Carey, stood for nearly a decade before the new generation of Cranford runners shattered it in dominant fashion.

Meanwhile, sophomore Brandyn Grant continued his meteoric rise, adding a second

indoor school record to his name. Brandyn has already left his mark on the program and is poised to continue rewriting the record books throughout his high school career. Both of his newly acquired records were previously held by Adham McGuire (Class of 2012).

With these outstanding performances, Cranford's track stars have solidified their places among the school's all-time greats, setting the stage for even greater achievements in the future.

Behind these standout performances were the guidance and mentorship of coaches and Cranford cougar alumni Eddie Baker and Bryanna Grant, who have helped shape these young athletes. With their continued support, the team is poised for even more success, and Cranford Track & Field fans can now look forward to these rising stars competing at Nike Indoor Nationals and the Eastern State Championships against some of the nation's top talent.





REGISTER FOR SPRING RECREATION PROGRAMS

Township of Cranford

Recreation and Parks is excited to announce Spring Recreation Programs are open for registration. They are offering a variety of activities for all ages and skill levels, this season's lineup includes youth and adult sports, fitness classes, arts and crafts, and engaging programs for all ages—preschool to seniors.

"We're thrilled to welcome the community back for another season of fun and engaging programs," said Steve Robertazzi, director of the Recreation and Parks department. "Spring is the perfect time to get active, try something new, and connect with others, and our programs are designed to offer something for everyone."

Early registration is encouraged, as spots are limited. Participants can browse program offerings at cranfordrecreation.org or in person at the Cranford Community Center, located at 220 Walnut Avenue.

Highlights of the Spring 2025 lineup include, but not limited to:

Youth and Adult Sports: Golf, volleyball, basketball, and pickleball leagues and clinics.

Fitness & Wellness: Yoga, pilates, martial arts. Creative Arts: Portrait drawing, nail design, and dance workshops for all skill levels.

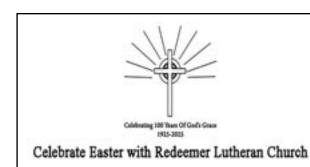
STEM & STEAM classes: science, technology, engineering and art-based science classes for youth.

Spring Break Camps: For ages K to Grade5; and basketball camp for K to age 13.

Join us this spring for an exciting season of recreation and community connection!

Please visit cranford recreation.org to see the full brochure. Follow Cranford Recreation and Parks Department on Facebook and Instagram for updates and more information. Questions?

Please email: recreation@cranfordnj.org or call 908-709-7283.



Redeemer Lutheran Church in Westfield warmly invites you to join us for Holy Week and Easter worship as we celebrate 100 years of ministry (1925–2025). Come experience the hope and joy of Easter in our centennial year!

Worship Times:

Palm Sunday – April 13th at 10:00 AM Maundy Thursday – April 17th at 12:00 PM & 7:00 PM Good Friday – April 18th at 12:00 PM & 7:00 PM Easter Vigil – April 19th at 7:41 PM Easter Sunday – April 20th at 10:00 AM Following Easter Sunday worship, children are invited to join our Easter Egg Hunt!

Come and be part of this special season of worship and celebration as we give thanks for a century of God's faithfulness.

Redeemer Lutheran Church 229 Cowperthwaite Place, Westfield, NJ On the corner of Clark & Cowperthwaite, Entrance on Clark Street www.redeemerwestfield.com



the

POWER YOUR POTENTIAL

At the Cranford YMCA, you can be, belong, and become. More than just a gym, we're committed to helping every individual tap into their potential, discover their purpose, and connect with others!

April 20-June 21

Priority Registration for Full Members begins Thursday, April 3 at 9:00am

Registration for Basic & Non-Members begins Monday, April 7 at 9:00am



CRANFORD YMCA 401 Centennial Ave., Cranford 908-844-YMCA (9622)

www.westfieldynj.org/cy

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.



EARTH DAY RAHWAY RIVER CLEAN-UP – SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Rahway River Association

All volunteers are invited to celebrate Earth Day 2025 with a clean-up of the Rahway River within Union County Parks and Recreation's Rahway River Park on Saturday, April 26th (with a rain date of Sunday, April 27th).

Please join the Rahway River Watershed Association, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, local officials and environmental commissions, fisherman and other stakeholders in this annual event. The clean-up will focus on areas upstream and downstream of the dam at Winfield Park, New Jersey in Cranford, Clark, Linden, and Rahway.

Please come by the parking area adjacent to the waterfall of the Rahway River by the Bloodgood Dam at Winfield Park at 8:45 a.m. to register, pick up bags, gloves, bottled water and snacks, and receive safety information. Teams will be encouraged to travel to any part of the river within the park where they would like to perform cleanup activities. We specifically ask all folks to register and to work in small groups for safety

BLOSSOM & BREW TEA PARTY – APRIL 27

The Floraphile Garden Club of Cranford cordially invites you to celebrate 75 years with us at our Blossom & Brew Tea Party! It will be an afternoon of friends, fun, tasty treats, enchanting hats and, of course, lots of tea! The event will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford on Sunday, April 27th from 1:00-3:00 PM. Tickets are \$45.

Founded in 1950, the Floraphile Garden Club has been an active and integral part of the Cranford community for 75 years, with members of all ages and gardening abilities. Community service is one of the core tenets of the group. Floraphiles participate in the yearly clean-up and beautification of the Cranford First Aid Squad, Girl Scout Park, Orange Ave. Pool and the Cranford Community Center. The club has also offered horticultural therapy programs at the Atria of Cranford and hosts workshops for seniors through Cranford's Recreation & Parks Department. Members participate in children's workshops at local schools, teaching gardening skills and the importance of conservation. The club also donates resources to many amazing, local organizations such as Cranford Family Care, the Cranford Historical Society, Friends of Great Swamp, etc.

Please reserve your tickets today by contacting Linda Moore at Imoore106@aol.com. Cash, Venmo & checks are accepted. Please make checks out to the Floraphile Garden Club of Cranford. No refunds.

The proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit the Floraphile Garden Club's involvement in all of their numerous community service projects. Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram @floraphilegardenclub. All of your support is appreciated! Thank you!

purposes. Everyone under 18 must have adult areas with large volumes of floatable debris. supervision to participate.

Cleaning up a river and park area is a great way to celebrate Earth Day and if you haven't participated in an event like this before, you will find it invigorating, and you will feel good about what you have accomplished...it is also fun and educational...especially for Scouts and young adults as they always find something interesting. Over the 25+ years this cleanup has occurred thousands of folks have participated, and pulled some amazing things from the river improving its quality. The Rahway River watershed is a better place thanks to the commitment of so many great volunteers over the last quarter century!

The clean-up will generally be between 9-12, but any amount of time or effort that folks can volunteer is appreciated. There is always a large volume of floatable debris to pick up. The team working registration will provide suggestions on

All participants should wear jeans, longsleeved shirts, gloves and boots, Waders are welcome for folks who like to get a little wet. Each participant should bring a standard 5-gallon carry bucket with a handle (put your name on the bottom)... this makes for easy carrying of "stuff" for transfer to the large garbage bags. A mulching rake is also a great asset to have to enable reaching out and pulling debris into shore from the riverbank.

After the event there is an inventory of the debris removed, and within approximately 24 hours Union County Parks and Recreation removes and disposes of all the trash.

There is no RSVP required but if more information is required please contact

rivercleanup@comcast.net

or the Rahway River Watershed Association at CleaCarchia@outlook.com.





VENDOR POP UP APRIL 6TH

Welcome shoppers and community members, you're invited to join us for a delightful day at the Fanwood Train Station parking lot on Sunday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Stroll through our marketplace and discover a wide array of unique arts and crafts, handmade jewelry, fashion accessories, candles, vintage women's clothing, children's books, all-natural dog treats, portrait photography, honey, vinyl records, polarized sunglasses, wooden American flags, and much more!

Our selection of food trucks and local restaurants will be ready to satisfy your cravings, and live music will add to the festive atmosphere. Discover one-of-a-kind treasures and enjoy a day of shopping and fun!

This free event is hosted by the Borough of Fanwood and is located at 256 South Avenue, Fanwood, NJ. Please note that the event is outdoors and will be canceled in case of inclement weather. For more information, please visit JC Promotions.Info.



ALL PUPPIES for ADOPTION

FESTIVAL CELEBRATES THE BEST IN SHORT FILM

The fifth annual Cranford Film Festival will showcase selected short films from rising and established filmmakers at the Cranford Theater on Saturday, April 26. Filmmakers and enthusiasts alike are invited to participate in an evening celebrating the best and most creative voices in short film.

The festival champions diverse voices and innovative storytelling by curating a selection of films that span genres from filmmakers across the globe. This year, the festival received nearly 100 submissions across categories including fiction, documentary, animation, iPhone, music videos and student films. "Best of Festival Awards," "Cranford Cougar Awards," and "Laurels" will be given in each of the six categories.

"As we celebrate the fifth anniversary of our film festival, I'm filled with gratitude and excitement for the incredible filmmakers, passionate audiences, and dedicated team that have made this journey possible," said Stephanie Levine, festival director and Cranford Schools Friends of the Performing Arts president. "This milestone is not just a reflection of our past achievements but a testament to our commitment to showcasing diverse voices and inspiring stories."

The festival screening will occur from 6-10 p.m. at the Cranford Theater, located at 25 North Ave W in Cranford. A pre-screening celebration will be hosted at Cranford's Yale Terrace Brewery for selected filmmakers and VIP ticket holders. A post-show Q&A session for audience members to ask questions of filmmakers about their films will take place after the screening. The full schedule of this year's films will be available online in April. Tickets are now available for purchase at the Cranford Film Festival website. They start at \$25 for the screening of the short film block. VIP tickets, which include admittance to the pre-party and a festival T-shirt, will cost \$45 for one and \$75 for two. The festival historically is a sellout event, so attendees are encouraged to purchase their tickets early.

The festival also offers an entirely virtual screening of selected short films for viewing online from April 27 to May 11. The virtual ticket also costs \$25.

The 4th annual Arts Day, a free companion event held in the afternoon before the film festival screening in downtown Cranford, will celebrate the performing and visual arts from within Cranford and beyond. It will feature performances from local groups, including Cranford High School's performing arts ensembles, at the Eastman Clock Plaza and student visual art on display in nearby downtown locations.

This year, the festival is expected to be sponsored by over 50 businesses, many of them local to the Cranford area, who have generously donated funds and products to support the festival. A full list of festival sponsors can be found on the website.

The proceeds generated by the film festival's ticket sales, donations and sponsorships support the non-profit organization Cranford Schools Friends of Performing Arts (FOPA). FOPA's purpose is to enhance the experience of the students participating in all performing arts programs in Cranford's school district. All funds raised benefit Cranford's performing arts students directly.

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MEET TSGT JAMES G. LASCELLES WWII B-24 FLIGHT ENGINEER/TOP TURRET GUNNER - ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86

Written and researched by Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault, with additional research by Don Sweeney, wth military guidance and proofreading by Vic Bary, graphics by Barry Mazza

In our final story before Memorial Day 2025, we continue with a theme that we chose for this year, honoring flight crew members. In our first three tributes, we highlighted Cranford residents who had attained the roles of navigator, pilot and bombardier. In this story we are honoring a flight engineer. We followed each of these airmen through all phases of their arduous training, where they were tested and retested, each wondering every day if they would be eliminated from the flight program. They all defied the odds, and in what must have been a glorious day for each, they were awarded their silver wings. These Cranford men took to the skies in all parts of the globe, each making a contribution to the goal of victory in their respective conflicts. Some flew many missions, and sadly, one of them flew only one. Technical Sergeant James G. Lascelles, United States Army Air Force B-24 flight engineer and top turret gunner, never had the opportunity to tell his own story. In fulfillment of our project's mission, we present it to you here. **CRANFORD EMBRACES TSGT LASCELLES**

James G. Lascelles (pronounced to rhyme with the word "tassels") was born in Brooklyn in 1918. It was a little difficult for us to follow James throughout his early life. His parents divorced when he was young, and both of them remarried and had more children. This resulted in a blend of step-parents and step-siblings living in New York and New Jersey. The two stepsiblings that we were in contact with or read about both adored their much older brother James. In a good portion of our Cranford 86 stories, our honorees are Cranford kids, born and bred. If they were not born in town, they moved here at an early age and went all through the Cranford school system. An obituary told us that James lived in Cranford, as an adult, for just two years prior to him entering the service in 1942. Although his military records all say that he was from New York, he must have designated his "home of record" as Cranford, and this is how his name ended up on the monument in Cranford's Memorial Park. We are not aware of any other military memorial for James in any of the places in which he lived, so as Americans, we are glad that this serviceman did not "slip through the cracks" and that his memory will forever have a home here in Cranford.

James graduated from All Hallows High School in Bronx, New York in about 1936. Before he entered the military, James worked as a production engineer at the Sperry Gyroscope Company in Brooklyn, New York. The company's founder, Elmer Sperry, was considered the father of modern navigation. Beginning with a navigational gyroscope, Sperry invented and produced many high-tech devices such as analog computer-controlled bombsights, airborne radar systems, and automated takeoff and landing systems. Sperry also was the creator of the ball turret gun, which was a feature of most American multi-engine bombers, including the Consolidated B-24 Liberator. Powered by electric



Young Edward Steers is perched on the knee of his older half-brother James Lascelles. In 2006, it was Edward who provided the DNA sample to identify crash site remains, allowing his brother James a proper and honorable burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

or hydraulic systems, turret guns were rotating gun platforms which held one or more weapons, allowing the gunner to aim and fire in different directions. During WWII, the demand for Sperry's products was great, and the company prospered.

While working at Sperry in September of 1942, James was drafted into the Army Air Force. A notice from the 1229th Reception Center at Fort Dix, New Jersey indicated that James' group of inductees was to be transferred on October 1st, 1942 at 11:40 am. They were to meet at the "IRP" (initial rally point) wearing "O.D.s" (olive drabs). These were perhaps the first two of a long list of military acronyms that these new servicemen would have to learn. Perhaps the knowledge he gained while working on such advanced technology at Sperry, paved the way for the great responsibility that James would have as a flight engineer on a B-24 during WWII.

TRAINING—PLANES AND GUNS

We were at first a bit puzzled when we read that James trained at "Willow Run". As with most American automakers in WWII, Ford Motor Company supported America's war effort with the construction of the Willow Run aircraft plant in Michigan. Designed by 78-year-old Henry Ford and aviation legend Charles Lindbergh, age 39, Willow Run boasted multiple runways, a mile-long assembly line and an enormous capacity to mass produce aircraft. It was said that at Willow Run, assembly of a B-24 Liberator aircraft was completed at the approximate rate of one per hour.

With a little digging, we discovered that Army Air Force personnel were trained on-site at Willow Run, in dedicated classrooms and



After the U.S. Army reclassified James as killed in action, this military portrait and an obituary appeared in the June 24th, 1946 Cranford Chronicle, more than two years after his B-24 Liberator went missing on November 5th, 1943. James was the 51st Cranford man lost in the war, a count which would rise to 56 by war's end.

training spaces within the facility. In America, the sense of urgency was felt everywhere during WWII and that included in the production of aircraft and the training of those who could maintain them.

James was sent to Air Gunnery School at Harlingen Field in Texas. In an intensive fiveweek course in "flexible gunnery", skills were developed which would enable each trainee to operate the different weapons stations on various types of bombers. Called the "Birthplace of Uncle Sam's Aerial Gunners", the year-round weather in south Texas permitted more than 300 days of flying each year in which to train. Days and nights at Harlingen were filled with long hours of hands-on ground and air training, and coursework. A large, white, fabric sail, carried by a jeep which sped behind a berm on the firing range, revealed who could hit a moving target. Each student's bullets were dipped in a different color paint. After examining the colors around the bullet holes, each shooter would be scored accordingly. Progressing on to machine guns and turret operations while airborne, trainees took a step closer to what they would experience in battle as they practiced shooting a target which was being towed far behind another aircraft. At the end of training, a proud moment occurred when gunners passed their courses and achieved the required scores for both ground and air

(continued on page 12))

CRANFORD MONTHLY • Page 12 • April 2025 **MEET TSGT JAMES G. LASCELLES** (continued from page 11)

targets. They would be awarded the silver winged gunner's badge, which signified the intense training undertaken and the hazardous duty performed by those who wore it.

Summer 1943 "Crewed Up" and Ready to Go The final phase of training for James and his fellow airmen, before going overseas, was assignment to a training unit. In the summer of 1943, at Langley Field in Virginia, James was assigned to the 2nd Sea Search Attack Squadron. During group training at Langley, officers and instructors directed the formation of individual air crews. James was assigned to a radarequipped B-24 in the critical position for which he had trained, flight engineer. Here, each air crew would begin to work together and form a special bond which would allow them to work effectively as a team on their aircraft. By now they knew, going forward, their lives would depend upon each other.

The Sea Search Squadron tested electronic equipment and developed techniques and tactics for anti-submarine operations. Crews also flew patrol missions over the Atlantic and searched for enemy submarines. Much of the testing performed by Sea Search was highly-classified and at times, missions included scientists from MIT, Columbia University and Bell Laboratories on board.

When their training was completed, the 2nd Sea Search Squadron, 1st Sea Search Attack Group, Crew 10 was assigned to the 43rd Bombardment Group, 63rd Bombardment Squadron, nicknamed "Sea Hawks", to fly radarequipped anti-shipping bombing missions in the night skies over the Pacific.

TWO FORMIDABLE ENEMIES—THE TERRAIN OF **NEW GUINEA AND THE JAPANESE**

In early October of 1943, TSgt Lascelles went overseas with his crew to the second largest island in the world, New Guinea. We are once again reminded of the magnitude of this war and the large number of countries which were affected.

After the Pearl Harbor attack, in their quest to a flight engineer's knowledge ranged from his create a Pacific empire, the Japanese began to invade one island nation after another. In a strategic strike aimed to neutralize Australia, Japan seized New Guinea in early 1942 from the Australians. The Australians, along with American cooperation, counterattacked in earnest. The Allies gradually pushed back Japanese forces in the battle for New Guinea, one of the hardest fought in the entire war. Midway through the conflict to regain the island, General McArthur chose to avoid direct engagement with the enemy. Instead, Japanese troops were surrounded, isolated and starved, a strategy which was believed to have saved the lives of thousands of Allied servicemen. This was where the Sea Hawks and their squadron of B-24's made their mark as they badgered and bombarded Japanese shipping convoys. In the end, more than half of the Japanese who were fighting to retain New Guinea, died from disease, untreated wounds, and starvation.

When James and his crew arrived, they were stationed at Dobodura Airfield on the northern coast of New Guinea. Their B-24 aircraft did not have a nickname and was known only by its tail number, 42-40972. The terrain and climate of New Guinea factored in to make this area one of the most treacherous battlegrounds in WWII. The island was dominated by rugged, steep mountains, some of which were three miles high. The mountains were surrounded by valleys, swamps and dense jungles. Rain, mud, intense heat and disease, combined with a lethal Japanese resistance made for a difficult and dangerous experience for these airmen.

In WWII, the B-24 carried a crew of eight to ten men, each one a specialist in their particular expertise. The crew member that knew the most about the aircraft and its engines, was the flight engineer. In a mechanical emergency, the flight commander always turned first to the flight engineer, the expert whose responsibility it was to get the problem resolved. The broad scope of



On pacificwrecks.com, we were able to see this photo of the proud crew of B-24 Liberator tail number 42-40972. Eight of these ten men were lost on November 5th, 1943. Standing L-R, 1st LT William Hafner, 2nd LT Arthur Armacost III, 2nd LT David Eppright, 2nd LT Charles Feucht, TSgt James Lascelles, SSgt Arthur Fredricksen. Kneeling L-R, TSgt Alfred Hill, SSgt William Cameron, TSgt Raymond Cisneros and Sgt Richard Salley. Fredricksen and Sally were not on duty on the day of the November 4-5 mission.



At Harlingen Airbase, gunnery training began with BB guns and then progressed to shotguns on the skeet range. These were the first small steps towards becoming a flexible gunner and veterans of this program all stated how enjoyable they found these two activities.

expertise as an aircraft mechanic, to having the skills required to fill in for the pilot in a critical situation, and everything in between. The engineer's pre-flight inspection included checking engine oil and fuel levels, fuel lines and hydraulic and electrical systems. Overlooking something as simple as a loose gas cap would be disastrous. When airborne, this would result in all gas siphoning from the tank within minutes.

In flight, the engineer was in close communication with the pilots and therefore stationed directly behind them. Although crosstrained in all of the gunnery stations on the aircraft, the flight engineer was assigned to the top turret position which housed twin .50 caliber machine guns. Besides being close to the flight commander, from that location, all four engines were visible to the engineer's watchful eye. The operation of a power turret took a delicate touch and James' extensive training qualified him to be the one to protect the skies above his aircraft.

In a WWII narrative that we discovered, a flight engineer described take off in a B-24. From his position behind the pilots, the engineer helped to monitor the instrument panels. After being given the word from the tower to take off, the pilot pushed all four throttles equally, ensuring that one was not ahead of the other. Uneven acceleration would cause the plane to swerve left or right off the runway. As the aircraft gained momentum, the flight engineer called the airspeed. "Ten, twenty, thirty...and then with the engines really roaring to life, one hundred, one ten, one twenty"...when finally, at one hundred fifty miles per hour, the pilot pulled back on the wheel, the plane felt the air under its wings and the wheels gently left the ground. As the steady climb began, a sigh of relief was heard. Their mission had begun successfully.

While in normal flight, the flight engineer worked with the pilots to oversee numerous systems simultaneously, such as engine performance and fuel consumption. He was always on the alert for fuel leaks, potential fire hazards, stuck landing gear and any catastrophic problems resulting from flak or other combat damage. We have read accounts in which flight engineers describe manual closure of malfunctioning bomb bay doors. On a B-24, this required balancing on a narrow catwalk, seeing the ground miles below through the open doors, in below zero temperatures. Many times it was the flight engineer who made the difference whether or not the plane returned home.

NIGHT MISSIONS FROM DOBODURA

Shortly after arriving overseas, James and his fellow crew members were called upon to put their months of training to the test. On November 2, 1943, under cover of darkness, their B-24 took off from Dobodura Airfield on an armed reconnaissance mission. There was bad weather in the area and it was reported that the aircraft had a faulty propeller. Flying 40 miles north of the Japanese-occupied island of New Britain, the radio operator spotted a ship. They had to take two runs at the target, but on the second time

MEET TSGT JAMES G. LASCELLES (continued from page 12)

around, four bombs were released and the 6,000 ton vessel below was observed to be in flames. On this mission, for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight, this entire air crew, with an average age of 25, earned an Air Medal with an oak leaf cluster.

In a back-to-back mission, James and his crew took off again from Dobodura on November 4, 1943 at 6:00 pm. The B-24 was heavily armed and carried enough fuel per engine to allow for 12 hours of flying. With storm activity nearby, the B-24 was shadowing a convoy of ten ships in the Bismarck Sea. At 12:40 am on November 5, 1943, they radioed that they had delivered three direct hits on the convoy, and the target, a light cruiser, was destroyed. At 1:20 am, the crew's radioman contacted the airfield and requested "Turn on radio range", the navigational signal which would help them find their way back to base. Hours passed, the aircraft never returned, and no further radio transmissions were received. Later that morning, another B-24 took off from Dobodura on a search mission and reported no signs of the missing plane.

The Cranford Chronicle announced that a telegram delivered to James' father and stepmother, at 609 High Street in Cranford, informed the family, which included younger half-sister Beth, that TSgt James Lascelles was listed as "missing in action in the Pacific Theatre of War". A long year passed before James and his entire crew were declared dead. Without a clue as to how their loved one was lost, it is hard to imagine the sorrow experienced by this family. James' name was eventually inscribed on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, adding further emphasis to the loss and lack of closure.

The Cranford 86 Project works with our public schools and other local groups to ensure that the stories of our 86 fallen servicemen from Cranford are shared to each new generation of Cranford residents. Cranford's scout troops have



When assigned to the 63rd Bombardment Squadron, TSgt Lascelles donned an embroidered patch (L), featuring a Sea Hawk ready to drop a bomb from its talons. The logo of his training unit (R), the Sea Search Attack Squadron, had a similar design with the addition of an enemy submarine periscope. Artists in the Armed Forces played an important role creating graphic designs that gave individual units an identity. They served as morale builders and created team spirit among the crews. Long before Disneyland, a young Walt Disney started his career by designing over 1,200 unit insignias for the Army, before and during WWII. always been exemplary in educating our youth about the sacrifices made by those who came before them. Recently Boy Scout Troop 75 made a trip to Arlington National Cemetery. Visiting "our nation's most sacred shrine" was sure to leave an impression on these young men. Before their trip, the Cranford 86 team prepared a presentation containing information about those of our Cranford 86 who are buried there. The scouts received a booklet with each serviceman's photo and story. At the time, we thought that we had provided a complete list. It was not until we were contacted by Russell Patt, that we learned differently. Russell and his family, residents of Mansion Terrace in Cranford, were interested in sponsoring the banner of James Lascelles, a WWII B-24 flight engineer who had lived in their neighborhood. While providing Russell and his family with information about their chosen serviceman, we were surprised to find out that TSgt Lascelles' story did not end in 1943.

NEWS FROM NEW GUINEA

In the dark hours of the morning of November 5, 1943, two villagers from Papua, New Guinea, were hunting. They were out in the bush, a day and a half's walk from the nearest village. Shortly after 1:20 am, the men were startled by the explosive sound of a plane crash. It soon became common knowledge among the local natives that somewhere high in the mountains above them, was the wreckage of a large aircraft. Many years later one of the hunters told his nephew about the crash and urged him to look for it. In 2002, the nephew, Robert Simau, somehow made his way up 10,800 feet, in search of the crash site. A few months later Simau walked into a government office with three deteriorated dog tags, one said "Armacost", the other two belonged to "Eppright", the co-pilot and navigator of James Lascelles' lost B-24. For the wives, brothers, sisters, children, nieces and nephews of the crew members of B-24D-120-CO Liberator 42-40972, all of the years of waiting and wondering were over.

Skill Training at Harlingen	Hours
Caliber .50 machine gun	40
Caliber .30 machine gun	6
Malfunctions	20
Turrets	50
Sighting	44
Aircraft Recognition	20
Ground Firing	48
Air Firing	52
Total combined training hours (56 hours per week)	280

This chart illustrates the scope of the curriculum in gunnery school in 1943. In battle, many of our enemies delivered much larger quantities of manpower, but with less skills. The high level of training received by American soldiers, airmen and seamen was apparent, and in the end, proved to be many times more effective.

BRINGING TSGT LASCELLES HOME

In 2003, a team from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducted what amounted to a meticulous archaeological dig. In a monthlong mission, the recovery team documented the recovery of aircraft parts, personal effects and human remains. The part of the instrument panel which was recovered included a clock which was stopped at 1:21, one minute after the aircraft's last transmission, six decades earlier.

We believe that it was Edward Steers, James' half-brother, who provided a DNA sample which enabled the identification of James' remains. On July 19th 2006, TSgt James G. Lascelles, was buried with full military honors, in an individual grave at Arlington National Cemetery. A rosette was placed next to James' name on the Tablets of the Missing in Manila, indicating that he had been found. Sadly, Edward Steers passed away in 2024, but his thoughts were recorded in a news article from 2006. "I'm feeling very thankful today. I never thought they would have found my brother". Only 5 years old when James died, Edward recalled staring up at his 6-foot-tall brother, who took him by the hand for a trip to the movies. In Edward's 2024 obituary, James was mentioned, an indication that he was held in his younger brother's heart for all of these years.

The sky above New Guinea was a very dangerous place in which to serve in WWII. It is

(continued on page 14)



In this photo of the B-24 Liberator, the coastline in the backround seems like the New Guinea mountainous terrain that is described in the story where James Lascelles' B-24 crashed on November 5th, 1943.



More modern and advanced than the Boeing B-17 Heavy Bomber, the B-24 Liberator was designed by Consolidated Aircraft. With its unique Davis wing design, retractable gun turrets and accordion bomb bay doors for less wind resistance, it could reach speeds over 300 mph with a range of over 3000 miles. Its vertically oblong fuselage allowed upright passage by crew members from cockpit to tail, unlike the B-17 and B-29 that required a belly crawl to make the same maneuver. The narrow nature of the cockpit created a shoulder-toshoulder intimacy between the four-member flight crew, unlike the other heavy bombers.

MEET TSGT JAMES G. LASCELLES (continued from page 13)



A large collection of wreckage photos from the crash site can be viewed online at pacificwrecks.com. Shown here is a photo of the vegetation-covered fuselage, as well as two of the machine guns from the wrecked B-24 Liberator, which have lain on a mountaintop, undiscovered for six decades.



To give our readers a better understanding of our hero's final mission, whenever possible, the Cranford 86 team creates a map which explains the details.

said that the air crews feared the terrain there worse than they did the enemy. According to military experts, there are currently about 200 WWII crash sites which exist in this area that have yet to be discovered. James Lascelles, age 24, was sent to this remote region of the world to serve our country and it took his life within three weeks. He served us with honor and it was a privilege to learn and be able to preserve this young man's story.

The Cranford 86 Project would like to acknowledge the work being done by the website pacificwrecks.com. Pacific Wrecks contains a wealth of information about B-24D-120-CO.

Liberator 42-40972, its crew, missions and recovery. This was a great asset to our team as we honored James Lascelles.



Cranford's hero James G. Lascelles' name is engraved on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial. A rosette was placed on the wall in 2006 to signify that his remains have been recovered.

Thanks go out to the Patt family of Cranford for their sponsorship of James Lascelles street banner.

Visit our website at Cranford86.org for additional photos and YouTube links that expand the historical events and engineering marvels of the period, as well as the complete collection of the Cranford 86 profiles.



On July 19th 2006, nearly three years after an incredible search and recovery mission, DNA analysis identified the remains of TSgt James G. Lascelles. He was honored with a full

military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. James was buried in an individual grave in section 60, site 8465, finally providing some closure for his family after 60 years of waiting and wondering.



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CRANFORD MONTHLY • Page 16 • April 2025

FRANCES WISMER SCHOLARSHIP

The Garden Club of Cranford is pleased to be accepting applications for the 2025 Frances Wismer Memorial Scholarship. Applicants must be Cranford residents and graduating seniors who plan to continue their education and pursue a career in a field related to horticulture, botany, environment, or related fields who have been accepted to a technical school or two- or fouryear college.

The deadline to apply is April 1, 2025. Instructions are on the application which can be obtained at the Cranford High school guidance office, or by email request to cancob@aol.com (with Garden Club Scholarship in the subject line).

GERARD PARADISO SCHOLARSHIP

The Friends of the Cranford Public Library is eager to sponsor the 2025 Gerard Paradiso Scholarship. It is available to a Cranford resident or employee of the Cranford Public Library who is currently pursuing or intends to pursue a graduate degree in library/media information science or media specialist.

Named in honor of former Friends of the Library, President Gerard Paradiso, the scholarship is worth \$1,000. The scholarship is not based on financial need. The candidate must furnish proof of acceptance/enrollment to an accredited university, a letter of reference, and an essay. The deadline to apply is May 1, 2025. To apply visit cranfordlibrary.org, or use the QR code

POOL REGISTRATION OPENS APRIL 1

Registration online and in-person is now open for Cranford residents. Registration for nonresidents will open April 1. Memberships to the pools is available to residents and non-residents of Cranford and grants access to both the Centennial Avenue Pool and Orange Avenue Pool, offering a variety of activities for all ages.

Cranford Pools provide an array of amenities, including float nights, pickleball, volleyball, basketball, diving boards, baby pools, a splash pad, playgrounds, lap swimming, and two expansive pool complexes with some of the largest slides around.

Please ensure you have a Community Pass account before registering online through the system. For account assistance, email pool@cranfordnj.org or call 908-709-7260 during business hours. Click on registration on the main page at cranfordrecreation.org.

In-Person Registration takes place at the Centennial Avenue Pool, 401 Centennial Avenue, Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proof of residency is required.

Scan QR Code to

Register for

Greta's Run

Cranford YMCA members receive a discount when registering in person with proof of residency and a valid Cranford YMCA membership card.

Summers at the pool kicks off with opening weekend during Memorial Day Weekend, May 24-26. The pools will remain open on weekends through June 15. Daily summer hours begin on Friday, June 20, with the season concluding Labor Day, September 1.

Membership options are available for individuals, families, and seniors.

Are you looking to ensure your kids have a safe and fun time swimming at the pools? Cranford's outdoor pools also offer swim lessons for children ages 6 months to 15 years, with registration beginning on April 21.

For more information on hours of operation and pricing details, visit cranfordrecreation.org and click on Outdoor Pools and follow Cranford Pools on Facebook & Instagram for updates. Contact the Cranford Recreation & Parks Department via email: pool@cranfordnj.org or phone 908-709-7260.





(above) To apply visit cranfordlibrary.org, or use the QR code.





Join us on Sunday, May 18th! Roosevelt Intermediate School - Westfield, NJ

9:00AM: 5K 10:00 AM: 200 Yard Kids Fun Run 10:30AM: Memory Walk and Dove Release

Live Music all morning by Award Winning Local Band Southpaw!

Come out and support Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss for a morning filled with fun and connection for the whole family!

Use code NEWSPAPER to receive \$5 off your registration! Register today at runsignup.com/gretasrun Learn more about Imagine at www.imaginenj.org



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LIBRARY APRIL PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

224 Walnut Avenue, Cranford, NJ 07016 • Tel: 908-709-7272 Email: cranfordlibrary@cranfordlibrary.org • cranfordlibrary.org Hours: Monday–Thursday 10am–9pm, Friday 10am–5pm, Saturday 10am–5pm, Sunday Closed

1:1 Senior Tech Help Appointments

Tuesdays starting at 1pm Questions about your smartphone, or other device? Register online or contact the library. Appointments weekly on Tues from 1-2:30pm. **Movie Night**

Wednesday, April 2, at 7pm Join us the first Wednesday of the month for a screening of a recently released DVD!

Lit Cafe

Saturday, April 5, 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. There is no required reading. Light refreshments provided Attend in person or on Zoom.

Romance Readers Book Club

Monday, April 7, at 7pm Join us for April's Romance Readers Book Club. If you don't want to read that book, feel free to come anyway to discuss whichever

romance you've recently read.

Cookbook Club

Monday, April 7 @ 6:30pm Bring a cooked recipe dish from the cookbook of the month! Please visit our website for today's cookbook author and to register for

> this program. Adults Create

Tuesday, April 8, at 7pm Join us the second Tuesday of the month for crafts! This month we are making beehives from small planters and twine. Space is limited; please visit our website to register.

Poetry in Motion

Thursday, April 10 @ 7pm If you're interested in poetry of any kind and from any era, this is the club for you! The first half of the meeting will be a brief, informal class highlighting the history of poetry along with some of its major types and techniques. The second half will be in the style of a book club, with poems that we will discuss and interpret together as a group.

International Film

Monday, April 14, at 12:30pm and 7pm The same film will be shown at 12:30pm and 7pm. Please contact the library for the film title.

Matcha and Coffee Painting

Monday, April 21, at 7pm Join us at The Morning Roast Downtown to learn watercolor techniques with coffee and matcha powder, led by a local teaching artist. Open to adults and teens 11+. Space is very

limited; registration is required. Vinyl Revival

Thursday, April 24, at 7pm Join Lance Jacobs, Scotch Plains resident (and record collector) for an encore presentation as we explore how to "read" a record. Websites considered by many as authoritative regarding values will also be discussed and shared.

Please bring a record(s) you think may have some value.

Books and Brew Book Club Monday, April 28 @ 2 & 7pm

(at The Morning Roast) Join us for our monthly Books and Brew book club at The Morning Roast! We are reading Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop. Registration is required due to space and can be done through our website.

Readers Forum

Monday, April 28, at 7pm All are welcome at the Readers Forum Book Discussion Group! This month's book is The Women by Kristen Hannah (2024). Additional g copies are available to check out and can be picked up at the Circulation Desk.



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CASA of Passaic and Union Counties Calling all trivia buffs, pub quiz champions,

and fun-seekers! CASA of Passaic and Union Counties invites you to its first-ever Pub Quiz Trivia Night to benefit local children living in foster care through no fault of their own.

Held 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2 at the "The World Famous" Waiting Room in Rahway, forget your midweek woes and enjoy an unforgettable night of brain-teasing questions, team strategizing, and community spirit. Whether a seasoned trivia master or just there for the laughs and good food – children under 12 years old eat free on Wednesdays! - there will be plenty of competition, camaraderie and, most important, charity.

Show off your smarts in pop culture, sports, history, science, and more, amid friendly rivalry and a community playing for a purpose. All proceeds benefit CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, which champions the best interests of abused and neglected children through effective advocacy in court, community, and classroom.

You can help change the lives of local children in foster care, one question at a time. So rally your friends, coworkers, or family and form a team of two to six players, or go solo for the big win yourself. Prizes go to the top three individuals or teams.

Pre-registration is suggested. Tickets are \$20 per person.

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For more information and to secure your spot at the table visit: www.childfocusnj.org/pubquiz, or contact Courtney Como at courtney@childfocusnj.org.

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties is a program of Child Focus, which prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children, and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. For details about the CASA program, call 973-832-4002, e-mail info@casapassaicunion.org, or visit casapassaicunion.org.







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ANNUAL YOUTH FISHING DERBY - APRIL 12

Youth Fishing Derby will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025 at Echo Lake Park in Westfield, NJ. The event is free for children under 16, and \$10 for adults who wish to participate. Sign up is early morning 730/8:00 a.m. and throughout the event.

Tagged Fish will be stocked that day so the children can see them get stocked. Prizes are awarded for different species of fish. This is an ongoing event until May 3 so if a child cannot fish that day they can sign up and send in their tag if they catch a tagged fish up to the deadline that tags will be received.

You may donate and sponsor a fish for this event. Download our form online at nbfcc.org, we can mail one to you, or stop in at Ponzio's, 211 Union Ave., Scotch Plains, NJ.

The Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club was founded in 1907 and remains the oldest fishing club in the nation. We are listed on Amazon Smile and are a recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit. We provide outings to support veterans, adults and children as well as people with disabilities which focus on environmental education, fishing knowledge and practice. We are always looking

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The Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club Annual for new members, donations, and volunteers if anyone would like to get involved. Our monthly meetings are held at the Kenilworth VFW, located at 33 S. 21st St., Kenilworth, NJ, on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. (except July and August). There is no fee to attend a meeting. For more information visit nbfcc.org or contact Bob Jones: BJonesJRNJ@hotmail.com, 908-325-6657.



(above) The Newark Bait and Fly casting Club Annual Youth Fishing Derby will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025 at Echo Lake Park in Westfield, NJ. - Photo from 2019 Derby

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