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ISSUE 140 • MAY 2025

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SAMANTHA SARREAL HONORED WITH UNSUNG HERO AWARD

In a heartwarming ceremony held at Morris Knolls High School on April 2, Central Middle School's Samantha Sarreal was honored with the esteemed Morris County School Boards Association Unsung Hero Award.

Each year, the Morris County School Boards Association invites administrators from each Morris County school district to nominate one student who exemplifies dedication, resilience, and leadership that shape their school and community in ways that often go unseen. The Unsung Hero Award honors remarkable individuals who make a difference, who lift others up, who lead not for recognition but because it's simply who they are.

This prestigious award celebrates Samantha's strong quiet leadership, compassion and humility, commitment to excellence, and amazing athleticism. Samantha makes a difference through her kindness, work ethic, and commitment to those around her. Whether through academic excellence, extracurricular involvement, or the way she supports her peers, Samantha stands as an example of how leadership doesn't always come with a title — it comes with action.

Central Middle School's Principal Michael Viturello praised Samantha as "someone who is committed to her school and local community and reflects strong leadership, and selflessness. You do not often come across a young person who also demonstrates maturity, responsibility, athleticism, and humility while maintaining stellar academics, community and church service, as well as exemplary skills in extracurricular activities." Long Hill Township Superintendent George Alexis congratulated Samantha and joined in the celebration of this year's Unsung Heroes and their inspiring contributions.

Samantha is a three-year member of Central Middle School's Community Service Club, serving Long Hill community in Stirling Lake Cleanups, Senior Center technology training, toy and clothing drives, and preparing trays of food for Long Hill First Responders. Samantha excels



((above) Samantha Sarreal. a Central Middle School Eighth Grader, received a 2025 NJSBA Morris County Unsung Hero Award



(above) Principal Michael Viturello and Samantha Sarreal

Courtesy photos



in martial arts, having trained Brazilian jiu jitsu for over 5 years and judo for over 2 years, winning multiple gold medals in local, regional, and international competitions, including the elite Pan Ams World Championship. Samantha is in accelerated classes, High Honor Roll, and was accepted into the competitive Biotechnology Academy at Morris County School of Technology.

Long Hill Township celebrates Samantha's character and achievements, as well as the countless unsung heroes who quietly transform our communities, demonstrating that true leadership does not require a spotlight – it simply requires heart.

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Ballhanding Camp (Gr. 2-12) July 26-27 Shooting Camp (Grades 2-12) Aug 4-5 **Location: New Providence High School** 35 Pioneer Drive, New Providence, NJ

For more information, or to register Call 925-768-8881 or visit



EXPERIENCE REVOLUTIONARY LIFE AT JOCKEY HOLLOW SPRING ENCAMPMENT - MAY 3-4

Morristown National Historical Park's SATURDAY, MAY 3 signature living history event returns on Saturday, May 3, and Sunday, May 4, Revolutionary War re-enactors from across the northeast will gather at Jockey Hollow for Morristown National Historical Park's annual Spring Encampment. This immersive weekend event highlights the daily lives of Continental soldiers and camp followers during the Revolutionary War.

Throughout the weekend, visitors can explore the sights and sounds of a recreated 18th-century military encampment. Demonstrations will include musket drills, military inspections, cooking, sewing, and other camp chores. Younger guests are invited to take part in the "children's muster," where they'll be taught how to march and drill like Revolutionary soldiers. This year's encampment includes additional interpretive demonstrations sponsored by the Friends of Jockey Hollow. Visitors can observe 18th-century carpentry with Scott Lance of At the Sign of the Adze, Ace, and Chisel, historical laundry methods, and trade interactions with the camp sutler.

All activities are free and open to the public. The schedule is as follows:

11:00 a.m. – Camp Opens

11:30 a.m. – Inspection of the Troops

1:00 p.m. – Firing Demonstration and Drill

1:30 p.m. – Children's Drill

3:00 p.m. – Firing Demonstration and Drill

3:30 p.m. – Children's Drill

4:00 p.m. – Camp Closes

SUNDAY, MAY 4

10:00 a.m. – Hike to the Huts with Soldiers (meets behind the Wick House)

11:00 a.m. - Camp Opens

12:30 p.m. – Inspection of the Troops

1:00 p.m. – Firing Demonstration and Drill

1:30 p.m. – Children's Drill

3:00 p.m. – Firing Demonstration and Drill

3:30 p.m. – Camp Closes

- The Wick House will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day.

The Jockey Hollow Visitor Center will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- All activities are free and take place at Jockey Hollow,

586 Tempe Wick Road, Morristown, NJ. For more information,

visit nps.gov/morr or call 347-949-3371.



(above) Re-enactors at the Jockey Hollow Spring Encampment in 2023

Photo by NPS

9/19

9/26

9/27

10/5

11/1

10/18



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CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS:

Tiny Art Show

Thursday May 1- May 31

The library will supply the tiny canvas and the paint, you supply the imagination! All ages are welcome to pick up a bag of supplies during the month of May. Paint your masterpiece and return it to the library by the end of the month. We will have an art show on Thursday June 5. Sponsored by the Friends of the LHT Library.

Bike Parade

Friday May 30 @ 3:30pm (rain date Friday June 6)

Stop by the library for a wheel-y good time! Bike themed storytimes and crafts and our 3rd Annual Bike Parade! Bring your bikes to the back of the library and we will ride around Kantor Park together. Come decorate your bike helmet with reflective stickers and listen to some bike safety tips from the LHT Police.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

Bee Lee Blooms Flower Hour

Sunday, May 4 @ 2:00pm

Join us for a fun hour with Brenda Liberti of Bee Lee Blooms. This time, bring a supermarket bouquet and a vase or mason jar. Brenda will teach you how to transform it with additional flowers and arranging tips into a beautiful center piece to brighten your day!

Blood Pressure Screening Monday, May 5 @ 12pm

Join us for some basic health advice. The Bernards Health Department will be here doing blood pressure screening and passing out other health related materials. Take care of yourself as you pick up your next great read or right before you come to the Gates Avenue Knitters Monday meeting, every Monday @ 1-3pm.

KIDS – Summer 10 Week Program June 17th-August 14th karate4peace,com Ages 5 & up PROVEN RESULTS Confidence Self Control Discipline Concentration Chu's Acaademy of Martial Arts 630 Valley Road, Gillette (908)647-4194

Shredding Day!

Saturday, May 10 @ 10-1pm

Come get rid of your private papers in a confidential manner. The Friends of the LHT Library are again organizing a shredding day as a fundraiser for the library. Bring your materials to the shredding truck in the parking lot in front of the library. Shredzilla returns!

Gardener Series - Wildflower or Weed?

Monday, May 13 @ 7pm on Zoom There are thousands of wildflowers, many with "weed" in their name, that are most beneficial to our native environment. Learn who the "Good," the "Bad," the "Ugly" and the "Questionable" plants are.

Dine to Donate: The Stirling Hotel

Wednesday, May 21 @ ALL DAY Eat at the Stirling Hotel all day and 5% of food proceeds will be donated to the library. Thans to the Friends of the LHt Library for organizing this event for the second year in a row.

Author Talk- Rachelle Bergstein on Judy Bloom

Wednesday, May 21 @ 2pm via Zoom

Everyone knows and loves Judy Bloom, a NJ native author. Her books have sold tens of millions of copies and continue to gain new fans. Discuss the allure of Judy Blooms books with author Rachelle Bergstein.



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TRIPLE FIRE ENGINE WETDOWN - MAY 31

The Stirling and Millington Vol. Fire Companies have each received new fire engines and will christen them with a triple wetdown on May 31st rain or shine.

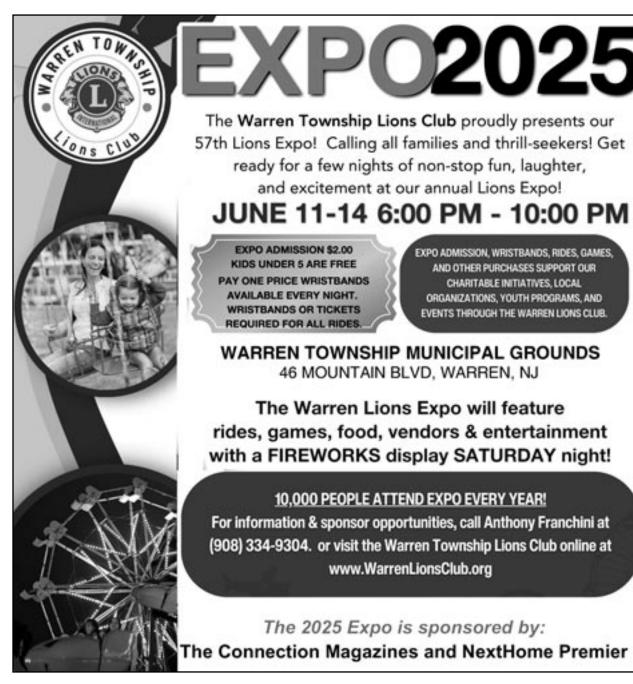
Everyone is invited to join in. There will be free food, live music, a DJ, games, a beer Garden, and after dark a fireworks display in the picnic grove behind the Stirling Vol. Fire Co., 321 Somerset St., Stirling between 3 and 9 p.m.

A triple wetdown has never occurred in the 159 years the Township has existed.

When a new fire engine is placed in service the historic practice of more than 100 years is to have other fire companies attend the celebration to place it in service and shoot water from the older fire engine onto the new one. It brings good luck to all the firefighters who will be responding on that fire truck and to those they will be rescuing.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE & OBSERVANCE

Join us in honoring the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our country. The Memorial Day Parade will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the corner of Main Ave & Mercer St., proceeding north to the Central School, where a commemorative observance will follow. Groups interested in participating in the parade can contact Long Hill Township Recreation Department at recreation@longhillnj.gov or to call (908) 647-8000 x219 for more information.









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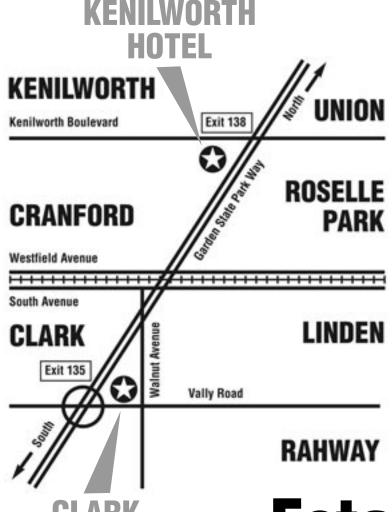
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STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN POETRY OUT LOUD COMPETITION

Watchung Hills Regional High School

A partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. The Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) English department launched its first year of Poetry Out Loud in September 2024. English teachers Mike Porter, Lynn Raimondo, and Michelle Lesniak led this initiative. Eleven students recited a poem for the full English Department during the WHRHS semi-finals on December 11th. Nine of those semi-finalists competed in the WHRHS Poetry Out Loud finals on January 16th.

Each student recited two poems during finals. Ms. Mary Ellen Phelan, WHRHS Director of Curriculum and Instruction, WHRHS teacher of Social Studies, Ms. Cara Yuknis, and recently retired WHRHS teacher of English Ms. Laura Goodson served as judges.

Zoya Balakrishnan won the WHRHS Poetry Out Loud finals with Tiffany Hwang as an alternate. As the WHRHS Poetry Out Loud winner, Zoya went on to perform in the New Jersey POL Region 4 competition at the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown.

The first year of Poetry Out Loud sparked much collaboration and learning through close recitation, performance, reading, competition. WHRHS plans to start its next season this spring to involve more classes, more teachers, and more students to give them more time to practice and prepare for the NJ POL Region 4 competition. WHRHS hopes to get more people involved, especially underclassmen, so they can see the whole performance.

They performed in reverse alphabetical order by last name, so Zoya was last in the rotation. This meant that "We Are Not Responsible" was the closing performance - it was a good closer for the show!

A reflection from Zoya Balakrishman "Poetry Out Loud was an amazing way for me to develop a new appreciation for a form of literature often overlooked by high school students in favor of their familiarity with prose. Before participating, I had heard of a few popular poets: Maya Angelou, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Elizabeth Acevedo. But the three poems I finally chose to recite were from entirely unfamiliar poets with uniquely fascinating stories to tell. I explored 18th-century sonnets alongside modern blank

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verse storytelling and practiced performance alongside comprehension. Poetry Out Loud is an amazing way for students to delve into poetry and its intricate interpretations without the pressure of creating original works. I received an immense amount of guidance and advice from our coordinators, all of whom helped me so much with my understanding of the poems on a deeper

level. At the regional level, Poetry Out Loud was a chance for me to discover the talents and perspectives of others as well as bond with passionate, like-minded students. I fully intend to participate again next year and hope to see even more students interested in the event, giving them a chance to gain the same enthusiasm and appreciation for poetry that I did.



(above) Michelle Lesniak, Lynn Raimondo, Zoya Balakrishnan, Michael Porter

Photos by WHRHS



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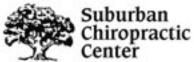


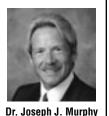
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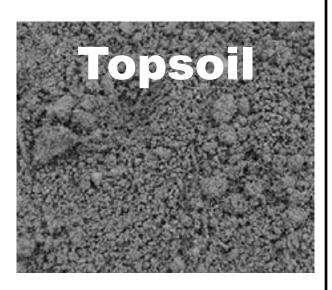


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recently completed their Agent of Change pantry. Journey. Through this journey process they learned about how they can use the Power of One, Power of a Team, and Power of the community to bring about change.

The journey concluded with a take action project, which after much brainstorming, they

Long Hill Twp Girl Scout Junior Troop 8211 decided to help the local Twelve Baskets food girls included a package of girl scout cookies and

probably find it challenging having random ingredients that may not create a full recipe. After further thought, the troop decided to create kits with a chicken chili recipe including all the necessary ingredients to prepare the meal. The tangible way.

handwrote cards with drawings and positive The troop realized that the food pantry clients messages to include in the food ingredient kits. The result was the food pantry has grab and go bags with everything needed for a complete

The girls were grateful to help in such a

Courtesy photos



STUDENTS TAKE STAGE AT TEDX YOUTH EVENT

Watchung Hills Regional High School

Nine students and one teacher from Watchung Hills Regional High School took center stage last Wednesday night at the TEDx Youth event, delivering talks on a diverse range of topics. From biculturalism to ocean energy, leadership to alternative transportation, these young speakers captivated audiences with their passion, research, and personal experiences.

The TEDx Youth event provided an incredible platform for students to share their unique insights and inspire change. Each presentation had a compelling idea, demonstrating the power of youth-driven innovation and critical thinking.

The event highlighted WHRHS's commitment to fostering curiosity, creativity, and leadership among its students. As these young speakers continue to grow and develop their ideas, they serve as an inspiration to their peers and the



PRESERVATION TRUST GRANT **APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 19TH**

Morris County

The Morris County Office of Planning and Preservation has announced the availability of grant applications to file for open space funding through the Morris County Preservation Trust.

The applications are available on the Open Space Preservation website: morriscountynj.gov/Departments/Open-Space-Preservation/Open-Space-Application

The deadline for submitting open space applications and appraisals for 2025 funding is Thursday, June 19, 2025.

In 2024, the Morris County Board of County Commissioners approved the Open Space Trust Fund Committee's recommendations to award \$1.8 million in grants for acquisition and preservation of 65.2 acres across three municipalities.

Since its inception in 1994, the Open Space Trust Fund program has helped to preserve more than 18,300 acres throughout Morris County, supported by \$300,022,868 in funding generated through a preservation tax approved by voters in 1992.

In addition to open space projects, the county's Preservation Trust Fund also supports farmland and historic preservation, county parkland acquisition, recreational trails projects, and the purchase of flood-prone residential properties.

The review process for grant applications is managed by the Open Space Trust Fund Committee, which visits the proposed sites and makes final recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners each fall.

"Any of Morris County's 39 municipalities and qualified charitable conservancies are eligible to apply for grant funding," said Barbara Murray, program coordinator of the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund program.

For more information, contact the Office of Planning and Preservation at 973-829-8120.



(above) Schiff Preserve Addition-Civille in Mendham Township.

Courtesy photo

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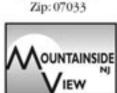
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860

960

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460

600

1000

1400

1600

1800

2200

12

TOWNS

560

700

1300

1600

1900

2100

2500



Qty: 6,500 Zip: 07059

18

TOWNS

660

900

1700

2000

2400

2700

3000

15

TOWNS

600

800

1600

1800

2200

2400

2800



Qty: 2,700 Zip: 07069

24

TOWNS

800

1100

1900

2400

2800

3300

3600

21

OWNS

1000

1800

2200

2600

3000

3300

700



Qty: 12,000 Zip: 07090

30

TOWNS

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1300

2100

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27

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2600

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MEMORIAL DAY: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION

Michael Boll, New Jersey Veterans Network

Every Memorial Day, millions of Americans attend parades, fire up their grills, and host large backyard BBQs for friends and family. As a veteran, I look forward to marching in a parade and attending a BBQ. However, before the festivities begin, I make it a point to check in on fellow veterans and ensure they are in a good place. For some veterans, Memorial Day is a difficult day, and they could use some reassurance from a friend or comrade.

For too long, our military members and veterans have been facing a heartbreaking crisis. A new study suggests that 44 veterans and servicemembers take their lives every day. This has become a nationwide epidemic, and countless families are struggling with this issue alone. Fortunately, there are many organizations working tirelessly to help our uniformed heroes get through these difficult times.

In 2017, the New Jersey Veterans Network (501(c)3) was created with a focus on the wellbeing of military members, veterans, and their families. The NJVN is a volunteer-driven mobile outreach team that actively seeks out veterans in need, providing them with free, life-saving resources and services. As a grassroots organization, we have a unique perspective on the needs of our uniformed heroes.

collaborate with other organizations that share our mission, has allowed us to save lives and help veterans live a better quality of life. Recently, the NJVN has ramped up our mentorship and peer support programs. However, our recreational therapy events and functions have produced the most impactful results.

The NJVN has had great success hosting social events such as: movie nights, group hiking, paintball, professional sporting games, fishing trips, hunting, and other outdoor activities. Additionally, every year, the NJVN sends veterans to Camp Patriot (a PTSD retreat) for a week of healing.

Each week, the NJVN provides veterans with food, clothing, housing assistance, VA benefits information, and mental health support. By partnering with numerous other groups and organizations, we can offer our uniformed heroes a better way of life.

We are always looking for volunteers that can both assist with upcoming events and help mentor veterans so they can live better productive lives. Volunteers are the most important NJVN resource, and we would love to have more people



(above) Memorial Day parade march







BUILD YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE: NEW DFY* SERVICE

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Struggling to build your business' online presence? NJLocalInfo.com offers not only a powerful, cutting-edge content marketing service, but also a high quality local directory to connect you with leads directly.

NEW JERSEY: POWERED BY SMALL BUSINESS

It would not be a stretch to say that the New Jersey economy is built on the backs of the small businesses that call the state their home. Nearly one million SMB enterprises are registered in the state as of 2024, a sector of the economy that now accounts for half of all employment in the state. Things are competitive, to say the least. So, how do you, as a business owner, stand out?

WHAT TO BOOST YOUR ONLINE VISIBILITY? **VISIT NJLOCALINFO.COM**

To answer that question, we need to first understand the shape of the problem facing many small business owners. There is one very critical thing putting many businesses at a massive disadvantage, not only when compared to other SMBs, but against larger competitors as well. That key ingredient? Digital marketing.

A recent Forbes report found that over half of all small business growth in 2025 comes from digital sources. Translation? Without a digital presence, you are leaving a huge chunk of your potential revenue on the table.

NJLOCALINFO TO THE RESCUE

playing To help level the field, NJLocalInfo.com has developed a two-fold visibility solution that will allow your business to quickly and sustainably build organic traffic in your local market. They accomplish this both by establishing high-quality backlinks to build site authority, and by promoting your business directly to customers through their own directory. PROVEN SYSTEM

Their content marketing services are based on their "Create, Repurpose, Distribute" system, which combines the talents of a team of human experts with leading automation technologies to facilitate broad-reach campaigns on a budget. The system relies on informative yet engaging content, which is then transformed into various formats using automation and distributed to

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